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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2022

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

1:00 P.M.

Department of the Interior

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration

Government-to-Government Consultation and

Listening Session

on

Alaska Fisheries

1 1:00 P.M.

2 MR. NEWLAND: Good afternoon, everybody.
3 Thank you for joining us today at our
4 Government-to-Government Consultation and Listening
5 Session on Alaska Fisheries. My name is Bryan Newland. I
6 serve as the assistant secretary for Indian Affairs at the
7 Department of the Interior. I am Ojibwe Chippewa from the
8 Bay Mills Indian Community, which is in Northern Michigan.
9 And it's my honor to be back here in Fairbanks joining you
10 all today.

11 So before we get started, I think we have
12 somebody to give us an opening prayer today, and then
13 we'll turn it over to President (indiscernible).

14 TRIBAL PRESIDENT: Yes. I asked Chief Nancy
15 James from to lead us in prayer.

16 MS. JAMES: (Prayer in Native language.)

17 MR. RIDLEY: I'm Bryan Ridley. I'm the chief
18 chairman of the Tanana Chiefs Conference, and I just want
19 to welcome everybody here to our traditional homelands of
20 the Interior Athabaskan people. And I want to thank the
21 tribes for attending the meeting; I want to thank the
22 Department of Interior, NOAA, for providing a space for
23 our tribes to be heard.

24 I hope that today's discussions are productive
25 and bring forward action that will resolve in better

1 management of our traditional resources that are essential
2 for people. I also hope that you will continue to have
3 meaningful consultation with our tribes to ensure that our
4 voices are heard, understood, and recognized for the
5 indigenous knowledge that has successfully stewarded our
6 lands for thousands of years. (Speaking Native language.)

7 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you, Chief Ridley.

8 Once again, my name is Brad Newland, assistant
9 secretary for Indian Affairs at the Department of the
10 Interior. This is our -- our second -- this was supposed
11 to be our third consultation here in Alaska. We had to
12 postpone the consultation in Nome yesterday due to the
13 typhoon response efforts. So we'll look to reschedule
14 that. But two days ago we were all in Bethel in Southwest
15 to hear from folks there on these issues.

16 This is a really unique consultation on our
17 part. A: This is both in person and hybrid, so I want to
18 acknowledge folks who are joining us online and on the
19 phone to participate.

20 But this is also inter-agency between the Department
21 of the Interior and the Department of Commerce. And we
22 are bringing senior leadership from both cabinet agencies
23 on behalf of the President's administration. So you've
24 got folks leading agencies at both cabinet departments,
25 decision-makers in the room, and we're here to hear

1 directly from you and learn about your concerns and your
2 ideas related to fisheries and subsistence. And we're
3 going to take those back with us and use that to inform
4 the work that we do at our respective agencies in
5 Washington, D.C.

6 So we've got a lot of folks up here, as you can
7 see. I'll make sure that everyone gets a chance to
8 introduce themselves. Then we'll open the floor up to
9 consultation, and we'll just say up front, we have to
10 leave promptly at 4 P.M. today. So I'm going to have to be
11 a stickler with the time as we get closer to that, and
12 we'll try to make sure that as many people get an
13 opportunity to speak as possible.

14 So with that, I will turn it over to my friend
15 and colleague Raina, and then we'll introduce ourselves
16 and open it up to you.

17 MS. THIELE: Thank you so much, Bryan.
18 Hopefully folks can hear me. Can folks hear me? Okay.
19 Great.

20 So first of all, I just want to say thank you so
21 much for being here. You know we've been out in Bethel.
22 We were supposed to go to Nome. We were unable to do that
23 because of the storm that happened up there. But we've
24 been tracking really closely what's been happening in the
25

1 region and on the Yukon River over this past season, and
2 the prior seasons as well.

3 And the real reason we're here is because the
4 Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, who is my boss. I
5 serve as her senior advisor for Alaska affairs. She
6 really wanted us to be here to host these consultations.
7 And they are historic in nature because we do have such a
8 cross-cutting group of leadership here. And it's really
9 indicative of the priority that the secretary personally
10 places on fisheries issues here in Alaska, especially on
11 the Yukon and the Kuskokwim, which have been hit so hard.
12 So I really appreciate you all being here.

13 I'm from Bristol Bay. I'm from Pedro Bay Native
14 Village. And we're also salmon people. And so the
15 stories that I've heard so far certainly resonate with me
16 and the upbringing that I had. So I just really
17 appreciate it and want to thank the elders and the tribal
18 leadership, especially. Thank you.

19 And over to my colleague Kelly Kryc.

20 MS. KRYC: Good afternoon, everyone. Is this coming
21 through?

22 Good afternoon. There we go.

23 Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for having us
24 here today. I'm Kelly Kryc. I serve in two roles. My
25 first role is as the deputy assistant secretary for

1 international Fisheries at NOAA, the National Oceanic and
2 Atmospheric Administration. And my second role is as
3 NOAA's Arctic policy lead.

4 In that role, I've had the opportunity to visit
5 Alaska frequently. And I've gotten to know the people and
6 the communities, and to witness first hand the changes
7 that communities are experiencing in your food security,
8 in your livelihoods, and to your towns and infrastructure,
9 which is affecting culture, tradition, and ways of life.

10 The continued decline of salmon stocks in
11 Alaska, which we heard about when we did these online in
12 January, continues to alarm us at NOAA. And it's a real
13 honor to be able to have these conversations with you in
14 person here today. And so, again, we thank you.

15 The loss of food security in your villages and
16 communities is something that NOAA takes very, very
17 seriously. And as many of you have already voiced to us,
18 this is not simply about catching food to eat. It's about
19 perpetuating a way of life older than the state of Alaska,
20 and older than the United States.

21 We understand that there are serious
22 ramifications for every fishing season missed by your
23 communities, especially among your younger generations
24 learning to set nets, operate boats, and cut fish. These

25

1 activities do not occur when the fisheries are closed,
2 which we don't need to tell you.

3 And so we're here to listen to you today and
4 hear from you. And I take to heart the mentions earlier,
5 to bring action and to ensure that your voices are heard.

6 And with that I'm going to turn this over to my
7 colleague, also from NOAA, Gretchen.

8 MS. HARRINGTON: Thank you, Kelly.

9 Hello, everyone. Good afternoon. I'm Gretchen
10 Harrington with the NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region. I'm the
11 head of our habitat conservation division, and I'm located
12 in Juneau. And I grew up in Juneau, so I spent most of my
13 life there.

14 So we really look forward to this opportunity to
15 hear from everyone and hear about your experiences so that
16 we can learn what's happening in the Fairbanks area. And
17 so -- and we're committed into taking meaningful action to
18 build stronger and more mutually beneficial relationships
19 with the Alaskan indigenous community.

20 As you may have heard, our Alaska Fisheries
21 Science Center has hired a tribal research coordinator,
22 and that -- in that role we are looking forward to
23 engaging and doing more co-development of research.

24 The Alaska region is also in the process of
25 hiring a tribal coordinator so that we will have somebody

1 that -- that we can coordinate with and that can just help
2 us improve our engagement on a whole suite of issues.

3 And so with that, thank you very much for
4 welcoming us here. And I look forward to the discussion
5 today.

6 MS. DANIEL-DAVIS: All right. Thank you,
7 Gretchen.

8 My name is Laura Daniel-Davis. I'm from the
9 Interior Department, and I'm the principal deputy
10 assistant secretary for Land and Minerals Management.
11 What that means is that I get to work directly with the
12 Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Ocean and Energy
13 Management, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental
14 Enforcement, and the offices (indiscernible) enforcement.
15 So some land and ocean responsibilities and the teams that
16 I work with. (Indiscernible) is also here today with us,
17 and I'm going to thank him for taking time out of his
18 schedule to be here with us with this really important
19 conversation.

20 It's really an honor to be with you here today,
21 and I'm looking forward to listening and learning. I want
22 to say for my part, my office, and for the Bureau of Land
23 Management, we stand ready to engage in full partnership
24 with federal and state agencies, for the tribal and
25 (indiscernible) corporations, and local communities, and

1 (indiscernible) interested parties to address the
2 subsistence fisheries concerns that we're here to talk
3 about today.

4 Of course the numbers are declining, as everyone
5 has said, and the issue of concern and challenge, and I
6 look forward (indiscernible) directly from you and others
7 (indiscernible) to protect the viability of salmon for
8 future generations.

9 (Indiscernible) is doing active restoration in
10 some of the water sheds. It helps support fish, and helps
11 along a little bit by some of these (indiscernible) passed
12 in congress last year. And we hope and expect
13 (indiscernible) to support (indiscernible).

14 We understand that we all need to work together,
15 and understand what we are doing (indiscernible), and we
16 look forward to being an active partner. And again, thank
17 you for having us here today.

18 MS. **ESTONEZ**: Good afternoon. My name is
19 Shannon **Estonez**. I am the assistant secretary of the U.S.
20 Department of the Interior for fish and wildlife and
21 parks. In this role, I oversee the U.S. Fish & Wildlife
22 Service, and the National Park Service.

23 I want to just take a moment to acknowledge and
24 to honor you, your communities, your tribes, for the
25 hardship and sacrifice that you have suffered due to the

1 low runs of Chinook and chum. I want you to know that I
2 am trying to understand to the deepest level I can what
3 this means to your communities, to your culture. I
4 understand that it is not just a food security crises,
5 because there are no substitutes for salmon, but it's a
6 cultural crisis. And my colleagues have said this as
7 well. It bears repeating because it's so important.

8 I was very moved in Bethel in what -- on
9 Wednesday when -- to hear from the communities there and
10 the hardships that they're suffering. And on the
11 Kuskokwim, and to hear their frustration, their pain,
12 their deep anxiety for the future. It is really important
13 that we're here to experience the pain that communities in
14 Alaska are feeling.

15 I also want to express my gratitude. I know
16 that we're developing some strong relationships, we've got
17 strong relationships, including, I think, a 638 contract
18 between Yukon Flats Refuge and the Council of Athabaskan
19 Tribal Governments. And I know -- I understand there's a
20 638, hopefully in development, with the Tanana Chief's
21 Conference. And these are the kinds of working
22 partnerships that we need -- we should be investing in and
23 trying to make work to help each other, to help our
24 communities. Most importantly to help salmon.

25

1 So I'm really grateful. I come here with a
2 tremendous gratitude, and really looking forward to
3 hearing what you have to tell to us, what we need to know,
4 from all of you. So thank you.

5 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

6 So as you can see, we've got quite a contingent
7 of folks here from um both departments. We have a number
8 of our agency staff on the line, also in the room with us
9 to help us. We do have a court reporter here to help
10 transcribe this meeting, because this is a formal
11 consultation. It will be reported out as such under our
12 department's consultation policy.

13 So two last housekeeping points before we turn
14 it over to you. We are accepting written comments as well
15 on this consultation period all the way through midnight
16 on October 28th. Those of you who want to submit written
17 comments, you are welcome to do so. You can send those to
18 the email address: consultation@Bia.gov. We'll repeat
19 that a few times, but the email address is
20 consultation@Bia.gov. And you're more than welcome to
21 submit written comments, in addition to speaking. And
22 that helps inform the work that we do.

23 So the way that we will run this is we'll have
24 our speakers come up -- who are here in person, come up to
25 the front of the room and take seats at the table. I

1 understand we have leadership who wishes to speak first,
2 and so we'll honor and respect that, but we want to make
3 sure we're hearing from subsistence users and community
4 members as well.

5 We do have folks joining online and by phone,
6 and so we'll try to monitor those of you who are
7 participating through Zoom. You can use the "raise my
8 hand" function on Zoom, or if you are on the phone, press
9 star-9 to raise your hand. And we'll do our best to
10 recognize as many people as we can.

11 We don't have time limits on speakers. I will
12 ask that everybody try to be concise with your comments
13 and respectful of others who want to speak and not take
14 all the time from them. And just get a reminder up front
15 that we will have to leave right at 4:00, so we'll
16 probably cut the comments off five to ten minutes before
17 then, recap what we've heard, and then make sure we close
18 up in a respectful way. So with that, Chief Ridley.

19 CHIEF RIDLEY: Thank you.

20 As I said earlier, my name is Bryan, and I'm the
21 chief chairman of the Tanana Chief Conference. I'm also
22 from the Village Eagle on the Yukon River and the Canadian
23 border. TCC is a nonprofit tribal consortium on the 37
24 recognized tribes, federally recognized, and 41
25 communities and tribal organizations across the Interior.

1 I want to thank you guys again for holding this.
2 I want to thank the Biden administration, the Department
3 of Interior, and NOAA for putting this on. You guys have
4 been great to work with. And we've had a number of
5 meetings together, so thank you for that.

6 I'll just start right in. Our subsistence users
7 haven't been able to fish for the last couple of years,
8 and they've been putting down their nets to protect
9 today's runs for our future generations. The hope that by
10 going without today, that our children and grandchildren
11 will have fish tomorrow is the hope, is the plan that
12 we've been working towards.

13 And as you guys have had said a little bit ago,
14 the impacts are weighing on just food security. It's
15 really come out more and more that it's so much about
16 traditional cultures. You know, we've been talking to our
17 tribes of elders, and what we keep hearing is how our
18 elders spent time in the fish camp. They lived in the
19 fish camp all summer long.

20 And our kids growing up today just don't have
21 that. It's gotten to the point where we're shipping fish
22 from other parts of the state out to our villages in hopes
23 that our kids will have a little bit of that learning how
24 to cut a fish and put fish away. But, boy, it's not like
25 it was back in the old days for sure.

1 The situation in our communities is dire, and
2 while I appreciate the consultation, I hope that you take
3 what you learn here from us and translate it into action.
4 That's what people are asking for, the action.

5 We've done our part, sacrificing without fishing
6 the last three years. Meanwhile ferry and (indiscernible)
7 catch continues.

8 As we have these discussions, I can't help but
9 say are a failure. We're depending on the federal
10 government and the State to properly manage this resource,
11 but I can't help but say that it seems like it's been a
12 total failure looking at the numbers of salmon that we
13 have coming through our rivers.

14 The biggest thing that our communities need
15 right now is to be empowered with decision-making
16 authority to recognize for the indigenous knowledge that
17 we have when it comes to managing resources, and the
18 funding to accomplish change.

19 Congress recently passed an inflation reduction
20 act, and with it a lot of money came, including
21 2.6 million for NOAA to help with the Pacific salmon
22 recovery. We got some recommendations on how you could
23 use those funds.

24 The biggest thing would be that tribes can
25 access the funds directly as a recipient. Tribes and

1 tribal organizations should have the flexibility to design
2 programs using our indigenous knowledge.

3 The smaller tribes that want to receive funding
4 through their regional-run (indiscernible) like TCC should
5 be able to do so. Now, by no means do I want people to
6 waive their ability to do it directly. The more tribes
7 that can get the funding directly, the better. But for
8 those small tribes that maybe don't have the capacity, if
9 they want to move with an organization like TCC, we're
10 happy to help.

11 There also needs to be a recognition that what
12 happens in the ocean impacts what's going on in our rivers
13 and vice versa.

14 The Interior river habitat restoration projects
15 have to be considered under your grant programs. Because
16 as I understand it, the bulk of those are focused towards
17 the Pacific Northwest. And you've heard all the people
18 talking to you from Alaska, you can't help but accept that
19 we need those grant funds up here in Alaska as well.

20 We'd like to recommend other steps that will
21 help better manage resources that are critical for
22 subsistence uses. Tribes should be provided 638 contracts
23 for the management of the federal lands. These contracts
24 provide the financial resources that when combined with

25

1 our indigenous knowledge, will result in better managed
2 lands and a healthier wildlife and fish operations.

3 We also request sustainable and recurring
4 funding for tribes to effectively participate in the
5 stewardship of lands and resources critical to the
6 well-being of our people.

7 The department should include a request for
8 increased non-competitive, recurring funding drafts to
9 tribes into its budgets in Congress.

10 We ask the secretary and exercise secretarial
11 withdraw authority to prioritize our rights on all lands
12 and waters in Alaska.

13 Finally, I would like to ask the department not
14 to recreate the wheel, not be bureaucrats and tell us,
15 Well, we need \$50 million more for studies when, as I
16 understand it, there was a 2010 federal subsistence
17 management assessment done, and many of those
18 recommendations apply today. So don't recreate the wheel
19 when you already have those studies that were done
20 previously.

21 I want to thank the Department of Interior and
22 NOAA. And I always have to throw in a little joke, so
23 don't forget that NOAA with a goal with the whole
24 (indiscernible) save the species. And so with that it
25 will help us save our salmon.

1 It is so important to us that we've got to do
2 something, and we have to have action. We've been saying
3 this for at least the 15 years I've been involved.
4 It's -- we just can't just have a listening session with
5 consultations where nothing happens. We have to have
6 action that goes along with it.

7 And with that I'll end my comments. Thank you.
8 (Speaking Native language.)

9 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

10 MR. INNIS: Good afternoon. My name is Steve
11 Innis (ph). I'm from the village of (indiscernible),
12 which is 160 air miles northeast of here. I'm the current
13 traditional chief of my tribe.

14 You know, I speak from my heart. I don't speak
15 from something that's written. And, you know, what you
16 all need to understand is we're paying dearly because of
17 inaction of the powers to be. This whole fisheries have
18 been put on our backs. And I say enough is enough.

19 I note here that this is about government and
20 government consultations of how we can improve federal
21 subsistence and management programs to better protect and
22 facilitate Alaska subsistence needs. To me that's
23 powerful words there.

24 And I can tell you, I've been involved since
25 1974. The advocacy of my people. And I've been through

1 many, many consultations over those years. And have spent
2 a lot of money being present to express their views on
3 things that affect us. And what's sad for me about it is
4 in many cases, I don't see any action. None. No
5 response. No nothing.

6 And I certainly hope that as you're listening to
7 us, that we're putting hope in you people to help us
8 because we have turned to everybody that we can turn to,
9 to help us, with no avail.

10 And we've cooperated all along. Agreeing to not
11 fish. That's not our traditional practice. That's not
12 our traditional ways. But we do it because we know how to
13 bring that fishes to our people.

14 So you can compromise for so long. And right
15 now our back is up against that wall. There is no more,
16 at least from my perspective, willingness to compromise.
17 We need action. We don't want words. We don't want
18 promises. We want action.

19 And, you know, our people understand the
20 resources that have sustained our lives for many, many
21 years. Whether it's fish, whether it's moose, whether
22 it's caribou, whether it's beaver, beaver skins and
23 whatnot, (indiscernible) and animals. Our people
24 understand that stuff.

25

1 Yet we have no place at the table to try to
2 impress policy. We can't take that anymore. We just
3 can't take that anymore. And as I understand it, the
4 secretary of the interior has the power and the authority
5 to change this picture for us. And I would encourage her
6 to exercise that.

7 I know sometimes it's hard for people to
8 understand, but it is that we are talking about it because
9 you don't live that. And that's part of the challenge,
10 too, is trying to educate folks about what it is that
11 we're really talking about here.

12 This fishery -- I was the president of Tanana
13 Chiefs Conference from 1999 to 2002. The first crash came
14 in 2000 during my tenure as the president of Tanana Chiefs
15 Conference. And one of the things that we noted back then
16 was the Area M intercept fisheries. So what did we did is
17 we brought our leaders from the villages to testify before
18 the Board of Fisheries to impress that intercept. We
19 helped them write testimony, et cetera. And the result
20 was the following year. It was unbelievable how much fish
21 came back.

22 And we didn't ask for the government to help us
23 do that. We did it ourselves. And so when we're talking
24 about comanagement, that is what we're talking about. The
25 ability to take that resources home and manage ourself.

1 And we have the capability to do that because we have the
2 knowledge of those resources. We know their behavior and
3 all this stuff.

4 So we need action, and we need it soon. I'm not
5 talking about two or three years down the road here. I'm
6 talking about soon. Fishing season is going to come upon
7 us here again. And it's an insult to me that those people
8 who have authority to make the change in that. We know
9 how things are being done, and our people are suffering
10 the consequences of that. This absolutely does not make
11 any sense to me whatsoever.

12 So I hope you all take our words as we are going
13 through this process here. And keep in mind that we can
14 do it. If other people want to fail doing it, give us an
15 opportunity. Give us an opportunity to manage these three
16 services ourselves.

17 Thank you so much.

18 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you very much.

19 MR. WRIGHT: Good afternoon. My name is Charlie
20 Wright. I'm the secretary-treasurer of Tanana Chiefs
21 Conference. I grew up on the Yukon River. It's about 100
22 miles northwest of here in a village called Rampart.

23 I've lived a subsistence lifestyle, hunting and
24 trapping and fishing my whole life. And when the people
25 of Alaska are salmon people, all of us are connected

1 through salmon. Especially the people on the rivers, the
2 salmon culture. And we're losing that culture. It's our
3 way of life, it's physical, mental, and spiritual to our
4 people.

5 We are connected to the land and the rivers.
6 It's our life blood. Our elders are used to eating that.
7 That's how we would raise our kids in the fish camp. We
8 teach them how to work and to be good stewards of the
9 land. We teach them. They learn what's right and wrong
10 there, how to not waste, how to respect the animals and
11 the fish.

12 I think after what Mr. Ginnis (ph) said about
13 comanagement and management of our natural resources, we
14 have been stewards of the land for thousands of years.
15 And we were really good at it, so I know we can do it
16 again. It took over 100 years to deplete the salmon
17 stocks that we managed and built as a people before
18 contact. It took that long, over 100 years.

19 Now we're seeing the bottom end of that great
20 stock of salmon of many different species. Due to climate
21 change, over-fishing, sickness, death from a thousand cuts
22 you could say. But through management, the feds and the
23 federal and state organizations, it seems that the shared
24 burden that just dropped on our people, and we're the ones
25 suffering for it. We're paying for it. We're hungry.

1 The steward -- the shared burden. It needs to
2 be shared, the burden, by all people. The state explains
3 that's where the comanagement is going to come in. We
4 have to work together, we have to start working fast. In
5 the last year, we've lost half of our stock with wild king
6 salmon in the Yukon River. Over half of it. So if you do
7 the math, we don't have time to waste. Something needs to
8 happen now.

9 And we request those stewardship with our tribes
10 and reoccurring and noncompetitive self-government
11 funding. After comanagement, we'd like to see and move
12 into old management of our natural resources. We've done
13 it well before, and we can do it again, like I said. I
14 know we can do that.

15 When our river the size of the Yukon River loses
16 all their salmon, it's disastrous to the ecosystem. Not
17 only in the inland river, waterways, sloughs, it --
18 everything depends on it. People, people with big
19 animals, birds, right down to the bugs. And the canyon
20 fish that floats back to the ocean feeds the
21 microorganisms in the ocean; and therefore, completes the
22 circle of life.

23 So it's going to affect the whole system
24 completely. So we are going to have a hard time coming
25 back if we don't do something now. If we lose all our

1 salmon, it's really going to be hard for people to live
2 and survive. With the way things are with the climate,
3 more people seem to be moving north and trying to rely on
4 these resources. This is not going to work. It's going
5 to cause more and more hardship unless we really do
6 something to manage them responsibly and make everybody
7 happy. There's a way that everybody can use their
8 resource and have it sustained. It just needs -- the work
9 just needs to be done, and it needs to be done fast.

10 I could go on all day, but I'm going to -- I
11 just want to ask -- I have one more request. I was part
12 of a consultation earlier on this year with -- not only
13 with Deb, but with you, Bryan. I just want to know about
14 our asks that were said in those prior meetings. We would
15 like to hear from you and your (indiscernible) on how you
16 guys are coming along with those asks and when we're going
17 to get some answers. We want action, sir.

18 And with that, I'll pass the mic on to my
19 colleague here. Thank you.

20 MR. NEWLAND: Thanks Mr. Wright. I will be
21 happy to talk with you after.

22 FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you. And thank you, all,
23 for coming today. I would like to ask (indiscernible)
24 Tribe leadership to look to the front tables. This is a
25

1 formal consultation, so we usually try to fill the front
2 tables.

3 Many of you know that I've been chief of the
4 village of Beaver since 2011. I am also the chairwoman of
5 the Council of Alaskan Tribal Governments. I was
6 appointed to the federal subsistence for the Yukon
7 (indiscernible) in 2017.

8 And I have to talk from notes because I have too
9 much stuff in my head all the time. You probably don't
10 want that verbal dump, so . . .

11 I'm a resident of the village of Beaver and the
12 national Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. It's part
13 of our traditional territory.

14 Our villages rely heavily on the salmon run for
15 our culture and our livelihood. We've testified to that
16 in the worst times in numerous different places. The
17 problem and the issue have been well seated. I represent
18 (indiscernible) today. And although my comments are on
19 behalf of my tribe, and (indiscernible).

20 Our tribe's past, consistently, since the
21 beginning of this administration for action to be taken on
22 behalf of the trust responsibility we had and the health
23 for our clients.

24 This is not a new issue, and with your -- you
25 all are really well versed in this issue because, you

1 know, Tanana Chiefs Conference has excellent policy people
2 writing -- really excellent talking to me (indiscernible).

3 So I feel like, sometimes, you know, in our
4 Native ways, we don't like to repeat ourselves, and it's,
5 like, offensive to us to have to repeat ourselves all the
6 time. But I always -- it's a little bit different dynamic
7 with the federal government because you have to say
8 something at least 2,000 times to get any traction, and
9 repeat it over the years.

10 So we're requesting that the secretary uphold
11 their trust responsibility, exercise the secretarial
12 withdrawal and influence to prioritize salmon harvest
13 opportunities for the Yukon River tribes. That's well
14 within the purview of these two agencies to prioritize the
15 salmon harvest for the people on the river.

16 If we're not allowed to fish, then fishing
17 should be shut down for the state of Alaska. And I don't
18 say that very easily because I firmly believe that people
19 do need to make a living. But if the stocks are in such
20 jeopardy, then we need to see extreme action like that.

21 I come from a family of fishers in the Yukon
22 Flats, and grew up with my family in fish camp. And
23 that's part of our way of life. And we only ask the same
24 level, of, I guess, attention that commercial fishing has
25 been given in the state of Alaska.

1 We're also requesting that you stop negating
2 your responsibility to our tribes. We've been in these
3 consultations before with NOAA, with other organizations,
4 for North Pacific, and every time we go there, we're told
5 time and again that "This is not our jurisdiction," you
6 know, "This is not our ocean," "This is not" -- you know,
7 it's always somebody else's problem, and it just keeps on
8 going and going. You know, that's one of the issues that
9 I have, you know, with working with the federal
10 government.

11 At some point, though, somebody needs to really
12 step up and really exercise their authority on these
13 rivers. We desperately need action, and we need all of
14 those asks to be -- at least follow guidelines. We've
15 given excellent technical -- technical reports, technical
16 talking points, and suggestions on how to improve this.

17 Without Action, the Chinook salmon
18 (indiscernible) will really become extinct. None of us
19 want that. None of us want that at all. Within my
20 lifetime -- I'm 45 right now -- we've gone from fully
21 relying on salmon fishing to sustain us for the whole
22 winter, and not only our family, but the ten families that
23 are with us. We sustain them through the winter, also,
24 fully on those stocks. And it's very, very hard and very
25 difficult to go from that level of having fish all winter

1 long to feeling lucky that we are pike fishing or fishing
2 for sheefish, that you catch one salmon, you know. And
3 then, you know, you're not even giving it to your
4 children, you're giving it to the elders. Because they
5 need it more than we do.

6 It's a little exhausting to -- to constantly be
7 asking for the same things. You know, we live in the
8 state of Alaska. We understand the politics around fish.
9 We've been engaged in these fish wars ourselves for
10 decades. So I think our main ask is that we would like
11 the ocean to have waters permanent (indiscernible), Yukon
12 River salmon effort for comprehensive management and
13 assessment of the Yukon River salmon.

14 In (indiscernible), it must be tribally led.
15 First nations in Canada, the tribes of Alaska. And
16 indigenous knowledge must be at the forefront of the many
17 actions taken.

18 We need new dedicated staff and a mediation team
19 to facilitate productive public policy dialogue to make
20 sure that these asks are catalogued properly and followed
21 up on. We don't want our words to continually go
22 unnoticed. I'm really thankful that you-all are here at
23 this meeting today. And it's weighed on my heavily, and
24 I've wanted (indiscernible) entirely with my people.
25 We've had tremendous losses over the last six weeks in my

1 community. And, you know, we just had a recent death in
2 my village, and I need to go home very soon -- and get on
3 a flight home. But I also have a (indiscernible).

4 Everyone asks that the agencies work to
5 establish reoccurring, noncompetitive self-governance
6 funding for tribal host stewardship, including the federal
7 subsistence management (indiscernible) with the federal
8 stewardship agencies. That was a lot of words, but we
9 would ask for a line item (indiscernible) that goes
10 towards these efforts.

11 This is just -- this is very important to us
12 because we know we're working with the federal subsistence
13 board, how that budget runs. And the State of Alaska is
14 always given money so that they can attend those meetings,
15 that our tribes are never afforded that same opportunity,
16 I guess, because they also told us that they need money to
17 attend meetings. And I was like, "Hey, you too."

18 So the federal government needs to do a better
19 job at educating the cumulative effects of federal
20 fisheries management, as well as do a better job following
21 national standards. These require cautionary management
22 right now. Like, the DOI right now is on the Columbia
23 River and had, like, (indiscernible) already stacked out
24 there. Their comanagement is already in place. Like,
25

1 there's already a model. You don't have to, like,
2 reinvent it.

3 I was reading about the Columbia River in a
4 class that I took last year, and it was a -- and they went
5 90 years without a salmon. And they got one, and they had
6 a -- they had a really -- a big to-do about it. And it
7 was, like, 90 years. I don't want to wait that long.
8 Like, I'm already 45, so that's probably impossible for
9 me. But it just -- that's a long time. That's a long
10 time to action to make sure that these things are
11 (indiscernible).

12 If bycatch area and (indiscernible) and climate
13 change are evaluated altogether and there's no simple
14 causes to explain the ecosystem collapse we're
15 experiencing, (indiscernible) our ancestral tribal ways of
16 life. Then the Federal Government shouldn't allow the
17 status quo to continue. We shouldn't allow the
18 continuation of bycatch when we're not allowed to fish in
19 the river.

20 I've heard repeatedly over the last ten years
21 how, you know, we -- we can't manage what's going on in
22 the ocean, we can only manage what's in front of us. But
23 I think this administration has a better chance of
24 breaking down some of those (indiscernible) management
25 practices than we have in the past. And, you know, what

1 then would I call it? A bold government. Something. I
2 can't remember. Something. Like a whole (indiscernible)
3 something. But it's the way that the federal government
4 can act -- interagency.

5 And there are other tasks forces that this
6 administration has been very successful with. And, you
7 know, we would just ask that you follow those same types
8 of models that have had really good success. We've had
9 excellent success working with this administration, at
10 least. But now we want to -- we don't want to wait any
11 longer until our salmon are extinct, you know, to take
12 action. We don't want to wait 90 years to get one more
13 salmon back in the river. It's time consuming and very
14 exhausting.

15 I would like to thank everybody here for coming
16 to the table, and I appreciate all your time. Thank you.

17 MR. NEWLAND: Ms. Vicca, if I could ask one
18 follow-up question on something you mentioned, that I --
19 that I starred here.

20 You had mentioned a -- getting a longer and more
21 permanent ocean-to-headwaters salmon management regime.

22 I know it's a -- I hate to put burdens on you,
23 but if you would be willing in the -- to provide a written
24 comment to kind of lay out what that would look like, I'd
25 really be interested in seeing that. I'm terribly sorry

1 for the losses in your village and your community, and I
2 know how hard that is on you as a leader and the
3 responsibilities that come with that, and just also your
4 own well-being. So our thoughts are with you and your
5 community as well.

6 MS. VICCA: I thank you very much. I'll make
7 sure that gets in by the deadline. And thank you for the
8 ones that are here. I appreciate it.

9 MR. NEWLAND: I will add, I know we've got a
10 couple of people who have raised their hands online, so
11 we -- we have two speakers at the front of the table at
12 the beginning, and then we'll go to the folks who have had
13 their hands up online. And then we'll come back down this
14 way.

15 MS. HYSLIP: Thank you for having this
16 consultation today. It's very important for all of us
17 here today. My name is Julie Roberts Hyslip. I'm from
18 the Native Village of Tanana. It's at the confluence of
19 the Tanana and Yukon River, which is about 120 miles west
20 of here. And like many of us here today, I grew up with
21 that lifestyle. And to see in my own lifetime this dire
22 crisis that we're facing as people is really bothersome.

23 You know, I could have got online and testified,
24 but I wanted to be here in person today because I wanted
25

1 to see you guys, and I wanted to hear what your reaction
2 would be to all of us.

3 So the first thing, you know -- and I've been
4 thinking about this for awhile now, about what can we do.
5 Let's ask the question.

6 So my question to you is Endangered Species Act.
7 I know that's a pretty drastic move that has to be
8 undertaken. If we were to have something like that in
9 order to save our salmon.

10 And so, you know, in 1970 when the
11 commercialization of fisheries became available along the
12 river, I think that was the downfall of our salmon. I saw
13 billions of roe being shipped out. And that was -- that
14 was awful to see. And so in order (indiscernible) we're
15 just first handing you the fish. And we have been doing
16 our part like everybody said. We've been sacrificing for
17 years, and I know because I made sacrifices myself. And I
18 know there's many different criteria that's affecting our
19 fish right now. Diseases -- like everybody said,
20 diseases, climate, all of that, overfishing.

21 So I'm going to keep it simple and short. And I
22 want to know what is the process for the Endangered
23 Species Act to be implemented? Because I think that's
24 going to be the only thing right now that's going to save
25 our fish.

1 And that's all I have to say. So please,
2 consider that. Thank you.

3 MS. THIELE: Thank you so much. And I think we have
4 met virtually on a couple of Tanana Chiefs, so it's
5 wonderful to see you in person.

6 So your question about the Endangered Species
7 Act, I will have to go back and dig, but generally the
8 process, you know, begins with looking at the species, and
9 with typically an analysis of what the status of the
10 species is, and how widespread it is.

11 And, you know, what you've done for me now is
12 given me something to follow up with our team to ask what
13 is the -- what have we done in the past to look at salmon
14 species in the context of the Endangered Species Act?

15 That is a process that takes -- as you can
16 imagine, it takes time. But, you know, it's certainly
17 something that I will dig into and find out. I just have
18 no idea. Have we done that analysis in for, say, Chinook
19 in this part of, you know, the world. So I will follow
20 up.

21 MS. HYSLIP: Thank you.

22 MR. NEWLAND: So we'll do our next speaker at the
23 table, and then we'll go to our two speakers online, then
24 we'll come back to the table. So . . .

25

1 Yeah. We're going to try to make sure as many
2 folks get a chance to speak as possible. I know we've got
3 three hands up online too. But we'll do -- we'll go with
4 you, sir.

5 MR. PAUL: All right. Thank you, Secretary Bryan and
6 all your colleagues up there.

7 You know, it's -- well, first of all, my name is
8 Eugene John Paul. I'm the tribal chief of my village
9 there at Holy Cross. I know Steve (indiscernible), and I
10 have a lot of respect for you in your position.

11 So, you know, it's really typical talking about
12 things that could have been prevented way at the
13 beginning. You know, as we, as people -- I'd even take a
14 place where I'm living right now. It was my ancestors.

15 It's a three-day boat ride from here on the
16 river. I can step in a boat right here and drive to my
17 village and walk to my -- where I live. I'd walk to my
18 house.

19 We pick these places because it will provide for
20 our families, provide for our kids. Things that we take
21 out of the river is our choice to live our way of life.
22 And while sitting there and watching things happen through
23 my life, I thought I would never be sitting here fighting
24 for something that we could have helped -- we could have
25 helped the state, the feds. Because, you know, who is the

1 best managers of our resources? Our people in the village
2 that are living there. You know, while sitting there,
3 I'll tell you a story.

4 We sit there and break up time. That's the best
5 time of your life, is watching the ice leave. Birds are
6 coming, flowers are going to start flowering. Everything
7 is going to start budding. And we're waiting, we're
8 waiting there for the fish to show up because, you know,
9 we live. I can tell you my grandpa, John Paul, waiting --
10 my late grandpa. He was our last traditional chief.

11 So what he did, he packed up the family, packed
12 up me, and we took a boat ride on a barge that barely even
13 moved, but it -- lucky his fish camp was down river
14 because you go fast when the current is going. But it
15 takes us a day to get there.

16 We don't see the village until fall. And we
17 stayed there all summer taking what we could use. We just
18 took coffee, flour, and sugar. But we lived there. I
19 lived there. And I know it's not going to happen -- I
20 don't think I will ever bring my kids and you that
21 experience because we can't do it no more.

22 My (indiscernible) at one time sitting on the
23 beach. Are we going to get regulated? That was about
24 eight years ago. (Indiscernible.)

25

1 He asked what did we do wrong. "What did I do
2 wrong?"

3 What did we do wrong? We didn't -- I told him,
4 "Well, we didn't do nothing wrong."

5 He took what he needed. We all did. We all
6 took a little portion of fish, anything that was in our
7 river. We took just enough to provide for the
8 (indiscernible) summer, then through winter. And some
9 extra for, you know, like, when we gather, potlucks, and
10 community outings, we would pull out the best stuff. And
11 it's our fish that we pull out. And that's the first
12 thing that's gone off the table. There's no -- you know,
13 what we share with our communities is charity, verily.
14 And we give -- the gift of giving somebody something
15 that's provided for the summer.

16 I can't give no more. I usually give our
17 traditional chief some little piece of fish, you know,
18 that -- I'll use -- we get a blessing back because he'll
19 get ten bowls again.

20 So I'm asking you as dignitaries that we need to
21 be able to manage these resources. Let us deal with it.
22 We have our scientists, we have our own people that are
23 bachelors. You know who they are. It is our elders. Our
24 elders tells us what we should be doing. And those are --
25 they don't have to go to college, they don't have to get a

1 degree. They're the ones that taught us how to take care
2 of everything in our -- everything that we gather,
3 everything what we put away, they taught us what to do.
4 So they are our biologists, they are the ones that, you
5 know, are in the forefront. They're the ones that put
6 that trade (indiscernible). And I'm just following it.
7 Because somebody else behind me has got to follow my
8 trail. So we have to be careful.

9 We also have to be careful with what we say,
10 what we do, because there's always somebody behind you
11 that's going to be following you.

12 So I'm just asking that, you know, we have -- we
13 have enough of our people that know how to, you know,
14 manage these resources. We've been doing it for time in
15 (indiscernible), so I'm just saying that we have the
16 resources, and we need to be at the table doing this
17 comanagement.

18 We have federal refuges, our federal lands that
19 are throughout Alaska, millions of acres. And the -- most
20 of the those acres are right out of that door. And we're
21 not involved, we're not involved in any of those decisions
22 managing those resources. So let us be the ones. Let us
23 be the ones that are managing these lands. Because
24 there's only one thing that we need. We're just

25

1 protecting enough stuff -- enough animals, enough food to
2 gather for our younger generation.

3 Don't let me turn around and call my son at the
4 table. You know, all of us are raising families, and I
5 can't do that. I mean as a leader (indiscernible). You
6 know, I try my hardest. I've spoken up. But don't let us
7 fade away. Don't let us (indiscernible) now because we
8 have to provide for our families.

9 So that's what I wanted to instill on all of you
10 that we are living proof, we're living it. I'm going to
11 have to go back to my village and live there. So thank
12 you, all. Thank you.

13 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

14 So we'll will hear from our first two folks who
15 had their hands raised online, and then we'll continue
16 going on down. And we'll try to alternate as best we can.
17 We're one hour in. So from the screen, it looks like the
18 first person who is the queue starts with a K. Karma.
19 Okay.

20 CHIEF KARMA: Hi. Can you hear me?

21 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

22 MR. NEWLAND: You betcha.

23 CHIEF KARMA: Thanks so much for hearing us
24 today. My name is Chief Karma Ulvi. I'm from the Native
25 Village of Eagle. And we're the Han Kutchin people, which

1 translates to "The people of the river." We're the first
2 community on the Yukon when the Yukon enters into the
3 United States from Canada. Our tribe upon -- are also in
4 Dawson in the Yukon Territory. And we're very closely
5 related.

6 I grew up living on the Yukon. My family
7 fished -- had fish wheels, dog teams. My dad trapped, and
8 just like our ancestors and many people have said before
9 me, our people have been on this land for thousands of
10 years, and we've always been able to feed our families and
11 live comfortably. We may not have a lot, but we always
12 had what we needed to survive and for the (indiscernible).

13 This is -- as you know, this is our way of life,
14 this is our heart and soul. And it's something that we
15 need to sustain our culture and traditions. I can see, as
16 a leader of my community, that our people are the happiest
17 when they're working within our culture, and getting moose
18 and caribou and fish, and teaching the young or spending
19 time with the elders.

20 This is when they're the happiest. And when
21 they're not able to do these things, a lot of times they
22 turn to drugs and alcohol and things like that. So we
23 need this to sustain our lives and our tribes and our
24 culture and traditions.

25

1 I have been testifying at the North Pacific
2 Fisheries Management Council. I also sit on the
3 governor's task force on bycatch. I creatively talk with
4 Secretary Deb Collins. And it's very discouraging when we
5 don't seem to get anywhere, or even with replies back to
6 our asks. And it feels like we're not being heard.

7 And I really want to stress that out here in
8 Alaska, we deal with many different things than living in
9 the city. You know, buy grocery or things like that,
10 providing for our people that live out here. It's lot
11 harder than some have to deal with.

12 And we're pleading at this point, I think, to
13 keep our way of life. On the governor's bycatch task
14 force, we have been presented on many different science --
15 so much scientific data. Sometimes it's hard to even
16 understand for the average person. And it really
17 (indiscernible) in a place where some climate change is
18 the major reason for the decline of our fish. And I
19 understand that are many things like climate change,
20 (indiscernible) predators and different things that are
21 effecting our fish.

22 But bycatch is one thing that we can control.
23 It's one thing that we change -- bycatch change will take
24 a long time to work with, to see results. (Indiscernible)
25 owners. But bycatch we can stop. And sometimes it's hard

1 for us to understand why we have to stop fishing when
2 others are still able to continue fishing.

3 We have put across research recommendations,
4 management recommendations, engagement recommendations in
5 the governor's bycatch task force. And one that I
6 strongly recommend, even with the federal government, is
7 talk to tribes, talk to the communities that are going to
8 be effected on a more regular basis, and involve us in
9 that policy making. We really need something to be done
10 with that soon.

11 I was just reading today on President Biden's
12 Proclamation of Indigenous Peoples' Day 2022. In the
13 first paragraph it says, "We honor the sovereignty,
14 resilience, and immense contributions that Native
15 Americans have made to the world; and we recommit to
16 upholding our solemn trust and treaty responsibilities to
17 Tribal Nations, strengthening our Nation-to-Nation ties."

18 I sincerely hope, at this point, that those
19 words are true, and that this is our message that you're
20 going to be taking back to the administration that we need
21 help. We need action as soon as possible. Not only for
22 us to feed our families, but for the salmon who are
23 suffering.

24 The US Department of Commerce, the city, and the
25 Interior should be working together, to ensure treaty

1 obligations to Canada are meant, the salmon
2 (indiscernible) goals are met, and that tribal and public
3 resources are not wasted through bycatch. And that all
4 federal government officials will fill the federal trust
5 responsibilities to tribes.

6 Thank you for hearing my concerns today, and I
7 really hope that we can get some action or more discussion
8 on these topics. Thank you.

9 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you, Chief Ulvi. Thank you
10 for joining us today and taking time.

11 We'll go to our -- Oliver, can you take the
12 spotlight off so we can see who the next speaker is on
13 Zoom. Will Micklin. And after Mr. Micklin, then we'll
14 come to you, sir.

15 MR. MICKLIN: Hello.

16 Mr. Newland: We can hear you.

17 MR. MICKLIN: (Speaking Native language.) In
18 English, I'm Will Micklin.

19 (Speaking Native language.) I'm the fourth vice
20 president of the Executive Council, of the Central Council
21 of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. Richard
22 Peterson is our president. We are the regional tribe in
23 Southeast Alaska with over 135,000 square miles in
24 aboriginal lands. The (indiscernible) and over 34,000
25 tribal citizens.

1 I will just speak briefly today on a few
2 (indiscernible). We will, of course, submit detailed
3 written comments. And we thank you Assistant Secretary
4 Newland and your colleagues for listening today. I think
5 we should begin with acknowledging the tribal leaders
6 testifying today. These are all important messages, and I
7 hope that I (indiscernible) even have as much as the
8 tribal leaders present today.

9 The Southeast Alaska subsistence fisheries or
10 the traditional fisheries are heavily impacted. They've
11 been impacted bycatch. There's a change in Eagle River
12 mentioned previously. The enormous factory fish trawlers
13 in International waters, the ocean temperature rising, the
14 ocean acidification rise, co2 absorption, many factors
15 have led to the diminishment of our fisheries.

16 A number of issues, though, need to be applied
17 to help us in our -- in our time of need. Why is
18 recognition of the subsistence fisheries not available to
19 compensation? The subsistence fishery is a noncommercial
20 use, and it's only commercial use that is available for
21 compensation. So our interests are not served by
22 compensation when (indiscernible) are going for the
23 commercial fisheries.

24 We do appreciate the U.S. court filing in May of
25 2022. With the State of Alaska seeking federal action on

1 the basis of ANILCA tribal (indiscernible), we think
2 that's an important action because of the failure of the
3 State of Alaska in addressing adequately the tribal
4 meetings with the fisheries. We think that there are
5 other (indiscernible) that our federal partners could
6 provide.

7 MR. NEWLAND: Will, are you still there?
8 Mr. Micklin?

9 MALE VOICE: I'm seeing him on the screen,
10 but --

11 MR. NEWLAND: Yeah. Mr. Micklin, we've lost
12 your connection. We can come back to you and welcome
13 your -- we know you're going to submit written comments as
14 well. So we'll come back to you if you can reestablish
15 your connection.

16 We'll go on down the line to our in-person
17 speakers. A gentleman, and Branden will come back to the
18 end of the table. We'll do three speakers here in person,
19 and then go our next two online.

20 MR. LORD: (Speaking Native language.) Thank
21 you. (Speaking Native language.) Thank you very much.

22 Thanks a lot for coming here. My name is Victor
23 Lord. I'm from Nenana. It's an Native Village sort of,
24 but 60 miles down the river from here right where we're
25 sitting. And we fish and eat salmon and chum salmon that

1 swim right past here on the Chena River. I also deal with
2 (indiscernible) fish camps. They call it Chena -- Chena
3 Camp. It's down here at the (indiscernible).

4 We're grateful to get together.

5 (Indiscernible). Jerry Isley (ph) is the last one I know
6 at the Chena Camp. Anyway, I guess I'm an elder because
7 somebody said something, but somebody that lived in fish
8 camp and traveled around to fish camps. I did that. I
9 was kind of born in fish camp and raised in fish camp.

10 As we started to go to school, we -- we'd go by
11 boat to the landing in (indiscernible). That's the
12 (indiscernible) I started doing. (Indiscernible) so we
13 were almost in the dark back and forth. And we cut
14 (indiscernible) fish (indiscernible). Late June or July
15 all the way until October for our food, for dogs. Dogs
16 are very, very important to us, those Native families.

17 And everybody at camps, like he said, it's a
18 social life out there. When the fishing slow down a
19 little bit, they have a little dinner at (indiscernible)
20 camp, and just working together (indiscernible). The
21 words of disciplined youth back then. It was a
22 (indiscernible) livelihood. That's what it was, a
23 livelihood. We had to buy a little gas to each other, and
24 get on a boat. We use the Pilot Crackers with our fish

25

1 and some rice with our fish. We (indiscernible) at the
2 store. But, you know, it's a livelihood.

3 And then words (indiscernible) came along the
4 same time the pipeline came along. This (indiscernible)
5 what you call a (indiscernible). The Yukon River Drainage
6 Fishery Association. And I am the upriver chairman of
7 that organization. And it represents all the villages
8 from below -- from Kaltag. Don and (indiscernible) got
9 all the extra (indiscernible). And the -- on the
10 (indiscernible) River and the Tanana River. The one
11 Village (indiscernible).

12 But on the upriver side, that's almost 4,000
13 miles. We talk about (indiscernible). The reason this
14 was started 30 years ago, I said -- I (indiscernible) the
15 Yukon and to help everybody -- Indians. I suppose that's
16 (indiscernible) Indians up here. We kind of was fighting,
17 really, in our politics and stuff. "We want more fish."
18 "No, no don't give me no more fish." Like harpoons and
19 arrows flying in the air. We get together
20 (indiscernible).

21 So they start that, and we -- I don't know who
22 did it, but somebody (indiscernible). I think Sidney
23 Huntington -- the late great Sidney Huntington. He had
24 something to do with it because of the first meeting was
25 held at the Village of Galena. And he said he got -- he

1 got a chance to (indiscernible). (Indiscernible) In my
2 Village. We don't know what's going on. So we got
3 together. We met each other, we shook hands, and we --
4 and at one (indiscernible) to another (indiscernible).

5 Now some of my best Villages are down here and
6 talking to you about it. Or (indiscernible) Village. It
7 brings my Athabascan Village (indiscernible) Inupiat
8 himself. So anyway . . .

9 So understand we got (indiscernible), and I
10 think there's a big misconception between us and the --
11 what's out in the (indiscernible) ocean. They noticed
12 that the (indiscernible), and (indiscernible) had three
13 fisheries.

14 NOAA, I believe they're the ones that somebody
15 said something about the Commerce Department. I think
16 that if (indiscernible) or your money from them.
17 (Indiscernible) commerce department is (indiscernible). I
18 believe through sacrifice of (indiscernible) up here or
19 decide that we're not done yet. We're trying to figure
20 out (indiscernible). We forget what's going on
21 (indiscernible).

22 Also, what I'm getting to is that the commerce
23 that (indiscernible) no monies. Subsistence fish salmon
24 has priority on the river system here. But once it gets
25 three miles past the Gulf coastline, there's no more

1 priority. Just open fish out there, out there in the
2 ocean. It's an open market. So we're losing our priority
3 for subsistence area (indiscernible).

4 So anyway, genetic studies out there where the
5 young salmon are going, and (indiscernible) there when
6 they come back. (Indiscernible) state law
7 (indiscernible). I think we got two biologists out there
8 in the ocean from the state (indiscernible) Fish & Game
9 out there in that big ocean.

10 I think they tried to work with NOAA, but
11 anything would help. (Speaking Native language.) Thank
12 you, guys. People want to speak, I'm sure. (Speaking
13 Native language.)

14 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you, Mr. Lord. I appreciate
15 it.

16 So we'll come back down this table, and we'll
17 just keep coming this way. And those who wish to speak,
18 you can come up to the front tables and take open seats.
19 And we'll do our next two speakers, and then call on the
20 folks who are waiting online.

21 MR. DEMIENTIEFF: Hello. My name is Sam
22 Demientieff, (indiscernible). (Indiscernible) in
23 Fairbanks. I lived up and down the rivers
24 (indiscernible).

25

1 Back in 1977, 50 years ago, (indiscernible). I
2 got to serve a term. And during that term on the Board of
3 Fisheries, the Fish & Game biologist commissioners
4 reported to the board what was going on with fisheries in
5 the state. It forced us to make (indiscernible) that the
6 high-seas fish trawlers, the international fisheries, are
7 making a big impact on the icy fisheries. And so we were
8 shown to this -- of the high-seas fish trawlers. Big
9 (indiscernible) factory fishing ships.

10 And the Coast Guard, who, it was reported to us
11 on board the U.S. Coast Guard when they were poaching,
12 these trawlers could not get into the trawler fast enough
13 to find out what they were catching with their nets. So
14 what they did find out was that the high-seas
15 international trawlers were using 20 mile nets. 20 miles
16 long. Long filled nets that were fishing
17 indiscriminately. That means they catch anything that's
18 out there. They get fish (indiscernible), seals,
19 dolphins, salmon, pollock. Everything that's there. But
20 they had a target fish. They'd go after that target fish
21 and take all of what is called -- they were talking about
22 it -- bycatch. That's all that's remaining, sea creatures
23 and (indiscernible). And they go off. They just
24 (indiscernible).

25

1 Now, they (indiscernible) in those high-seas
2 bycatch is king salmon and all the kind of fish that come
3 in to Alaska, Siberia, and other coastal countries.

4 Now, to me, when I heard that, the Coast Guard
5 also said that they -- once a trawler cuts the lines --
6 it's hard the to believe this -- 20 miles long. Once they
7 cut those lines, you got long (indiscernible). You got
8 floaters and sinkers. Fishing continually. Nobody picks
9 it up. They (indiscernible) has bales of death.

10 When you think about that, how many fish that
11 they were -- they couldn't catch with a fish net fight for
12 (indiscernible) and couldn't get one of them. So the
13 (indiscernible) got a guy from the Yukon River
14 (indiscernible) they can catch them and they can scoop up
15 a whole school of fish destined to the Chena River, up the
16 (indiscernible) River, or the river Village, whatever
17 river they're going on. They could kill off that whole
18 (indiscernible). Now, to me I was stunned. I was really
19 saddened by that.

20 Now, here it is 2022. This was recorded in
21 1977. So you're asking us about bycatch and climate
22 change. Bycatch is the (indiscernible) fisheries, and
23 they include fisheries from different countries, including
24 the United States. (Indiscernible) fisheries that we can
25 control. They can do something about that.

1 Climate change is a different thing altogether.
2 It effects the whole earth. And it effects all of the
3 rivers in the Alaska and Canada. In fact, it effects
4 rivers all over the world. So this thing, climate change,
5 is not local. It's just like it in the North Pacific
6 fisheries. And we're talking about our salmon. We're the
7 talking about everybody that breathes, every person that's
8 alive here and now is affected by climate change. It
9 affects our salmon too. So when they talk about climate
10 change, they just go Think of something really comfortable
11 for you personally. How does it affect you personally?

12 Well, everybody I hear, the emotional feelings I
13 get from them, I hear it. I feel it. It effects my
14 spirit, and where I come from, we respect nature.

15 Now, I can tell you that up the Tanana Valley,
16 they wouldn't go towards Delta. There's a creek up there
17 called Shaw Creek. There was an anthropologist and
18 archeologist that discovered human remains on the bluff at
19 Shaw Creek. And there was people -- they found their DNA.
20 Athabascan people 11,000 years ago. They found bones of
21 fish along the coast of this creek. Salmon. Salmon.
22 11,000 years on this (indiscernible) valley up and down
23 the -- down it. Where we lived. There were fish people.
24 And I hear a lot of people here saying that. We are.
25 We're fish people. But I think that we have to think

1 about it. Not only climate change because of some
2 (indiscernible). We have lots of stories about
3 (indiscernible) talking about climate change. And they're
4 not very good stories. And I do want to encourage you and
5 the people that go back and talk about this, we know about
6 science and about studies. Just like Steve said, and
7 (indiscernible) said, and other people that are
8 testifying. We knew about the studies. We need action.
9 We need something done. We need something done. We
10 cannot do this.

11 Our parents, our ancestors would say -- they'd
12 tell us when we're doing something in the village
13 (indiscernible), get up and do something. Don't sit
14 around and talk about it, do something. I'm telling you,
15 and I'm asking you to do something about this.
16 (Indiscernible.) You know, we suffer from the lack of
17 (indiscernible).

18 But I appreciate being here today. And I
19 appreciate being able to testify. And I feel the same
20 thing that other people. You hear it in the emotion and
21 the concern they have in their voices. I want to express
22 that same concern. I have kids and grandkids. So I do
23 appreciate you being here. Thank you.

24 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you so much.

25

1 MS. JAMES: I think we could take a moment of
2 all our busy lives to remember our tribal members that we
3 have lost with this COVID situation.

4 We need to ask the chief of -- the first chief
5 or Gwichyaa Zhee Tribal Government. Probably one of the
6 largest Gwich'in (indiscernible) Tanana Chiefs
7 (indiscernible).

8 Today -- (speaking Native language) -- listen,
9 hear, action. We need to ask ourselves, 93.638. That's a
10 tribal treaty. How long must we always sacrifice on
11 behalf of our people to exercise 93.638, sovereignty to
12 take care of the land? How long?

13 Looking at the historical history of my brothers
14 and sisters down in the States. Fighting all these years
15 for land, for a little piece of land Native allotment.

16 Historical history. In 1971, land claims was
17 signed. Already then there was an issue between
18 (indiscernible) subsistence. Subsistence. Today, 50
19 years later, historically, the state of Alaska will not
20 take care or fight his sovereignty rights. What is
21 subsistence? And now we are fighting for food security.
22 We're fighting for just basic rights, human rights, to say
23 "Can I go out and fish?"

24 We have been very respectful as Native people.
25 When they ask us to let us have surveys and studies,

1 studies, as Native people in private, we have been studied
2 and surveyed. And what are they doing with their survey?

3 When they asked us to sacrifice another year to
4 not fish, being Native people, being who we are, we said,
5 "Yes." We have done that for three years. And yet when
6 we see the resources for the state of Alaska, our
7 governor, increasing permits for sports fishing, and we
8 see commercial fishing going on, we ask ourself and we see
9 we're being discriminated against on this side, as Native
10 people.

11 And then if truth really comes out on
12 sovereignty issues, the Federal Government, the Department
13 and Secretary of the Interior, when we got those lands,
14 there's a promise there when we sign a strike. That's a
15 trust issue to protect our land. And it is not just land,
16 it's resources, natural resources.

17 You hear the state of Alaska -- and we fought
18 with one of the tribes with other tribes over some marsh
19 land. When we were fighting for one, it also entails
20 water rights. Fishing has to have water rights. It's got
21 to have clean water, EPA. And so we ask ourselves, "How
22 long must we continue to sacrifice for the State of Alaska
23 to recognize?"

24

25

1 We got caught in between two because of Alaska
2 Native Claims Settlement Act. Cooperation, tribes. And
3 that should not be.

4 I sit here reminding history, Sitting Bull,
5 sitting there looking far away for killing about land.
6 When they keep off the land, that means they're going to
7 take over the water rights and everything else. We're so
8 regulated as Native people, and we need to be watchful, to
9 be aware of that.

10 And today, I sit here on behalf of my people and
11 say that we can no longer sacrifice. I'm asking on behalf
12 of our people. Let's hear. Let's take action. If the
13 federal government exercises their rights to partake
14 Tribal rights and what was signed on the agreement. If
15 the State can't do it, and that's what's happening now.

16 If we can start a (indiscernible) between the
17 state and the federal under the land claims right that was
18 signed in '71. And it's been 50 years. So I ask you,
19 comanagement. And we have been involved in comanagement.
20 Let's work together! Let's implement. And I say if the
21 state can't do it, then the federal government needs to do
22 it with the department secretary with price, and exercise
23 that right of sovereignty. Thank you.

24 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you for that. Mam, can
25 we -- would you mind sharing your name with us.

1 MS. JAMES: Nancy James. Chief of Gwichyaa Zhee,
2 Fort Yukon.

3 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

4 We're going to call on our next speaker online.
5 Those of you joining us by Zoom and by phone, can you
6 please mute your microphones until you're called on to
7 speak.

8 It looks like our next person we'll do is Sarah
9 Branch?

10 FEMALE SPEAKER: Sonta Roach.

11 MR. NEWLAND: Oh, Sonta Roach. Close.

12 MS. ROACH: Okay. Thank you. And I just
13 listening to the chief and thinking of words, it's so hard
14 to go after her.

15 And I want to share and express my respect,
16 also, to the elders that are (indiscernible) to get elders
17 ready to testify as well. So usually I wait until our
18 elders speak first. So I apologize for taking the mic
19 here.

20 (Speaking Native language.) Hello, everyone,
21 elders, respected government officials, tribal
22 leaderships. Sonta Hamilton Roach, (speaking Native
23 language.)

24 My name is Sonta Hamilton Roach. The hat that I
25 never take off is I'm a mother, a fisherwoman, and tribal

1 member from Shageluk Native Village. I also serve with
2 under (indiscernible) the regional board in
3 (indiscernible), and I'm currently a professor at the
4 University of Alaska Fairbanks.

5 I'm from Shageluk, a Village of about 80 to 100
6 people, depending on the year. We're at that 100 mark
7 during the summer months. And my family, this community,
8 we live a way of life that is dependent on the land, and
9 primarily dependent upon fish. It is a subsistence based,
10 but truly it is a way of life. And my main concern that I
11 recognize and (indiscernible) today is the desecration of
12 the salmon species.

13 The most relevant thing that I can compare it to
14 today is the supply chain crisis we're having in the
15 United States now. And maybe you'll understand it more
16 from that perspective. Our main food supply is no coming
17 down to Haines, and we don't know when it will. We don't
18 know how to help. And we just know that
19 our (indiscernible) is still there.

20 And while there's no way to help the supply, we
21 have to stop our own fishing, which we had to do, sadly.
22 I didn't have to recognize that those in the oceans who
23 harvest the same population of the fish do not. They
24 didn't have to pull their nets. They didn't have to go
25 down to some of the smallest net sizes. And they didn't

1 have to worry about their supply of fish for the rest of
2 the year like we all did.

3 This summer, due to the small net size, all we
4 pulled out of our nets was pike. Actually as they pulled
5 out, most all of the fish, they said it was pike, but then
6 you want to pull pike out of the net, you know, it's
7 really hard. But it's a (indiscernible) food, and a food
8 that we'll never, you know, take for granted. We always
9 really value the pike in our area. But it's not only what
10 we survive on.

11 So the decimation of the fish population,
12 primarily the Chinook and chum, having (indiscernible) so
13 greatly. And I don't want my children's memories of
14 fishing to be receiving donated fish off of their plate.
15 And while I appreciate the kindness of those who donate
16 the fish, I don't want it to be normal for my family and
17 my children to be getting a free handout from others.
18 That's not the way of our people. We pay for everything.
19 It's a the of reciprocity. For the fish, to put it away,
20 and to eat how we have for thousands of years.

21 I miss the long hours in the smoke house, the
22 late nights preparing and putting up the fish and putting
23 it away for the year.

24 And this is what our ancestors lived considered
25 to be a starvation time. We're in a starvation time. If

1 we didn't have the stores, if we didn't have, you know,
2 the generosity of our neighbors providing us with fish --
3 this is a starvation time for people. And thank goodness
4 for our (indiscernible) in the land, the moose, the birds.

5 However now, we have the ability to work
6 together, and have the abilities and have changes that are
7 positive and need results. Locally we stopped fishing.
8 Now, regionally, statewide at the federal level, what are
9 you, the players, the key players, or those that are not
10 here -- play nice -- what are they doing? And what should
11 they be doing? And we ask the questions and we do need
12 answers for because we've done our part.

13 And while I appreciate our consultation time and
14 what it means and I recognize the significance, I think we
15 are all here asking today for action, we're wanting a
16 response. We have the data, you have the resources, you
17 have the information in front of you. You know that
18 system at play; and therefore, you have the ability to
19 make changes that meet us here as a fisherwoman raising my
20 family, I do not have -- I do not have that ability.

21 And then (indiscernible) that the fishing
22 industry is dying. A billion-dollar industry. But it's
23 success is on the backs of our people. It's on the backs
24 of our fish, the fish. And even if they don't play nice,
25

1 we have to be willing to do the work and to push those
2 boundaries that the industry has created.

3 I was really interested in what Julie Roberts
4 said from Tanana and (indiscernible) that and all their
5 comments that were there also about -- it's an
6 alternative. So I think they've got TCC bringing folks
7 together today. We really had some great talking points
8 bringing together some action-oriented thoughts and ideas
9 and suggestions. And I think we're all ready for those
10 changes.

11 And I am grateful for this opportunity to
12 testify (indiscernible). I'd like to express my gratitude
13 to those who do this work on a daily basis. And our
14 tribal leadership who have really been doing this for
15 decades. I just attended a few meetings, but I really
16 much rather be out on the land, to be honest. But I want
17 to recognize the hard work that they put in all the time
18 on behalf of all of us. So thank you.

19 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you so much. Our next
20 speaker is joining us by phone. Number ending in 3073.

21 You can press star-6 to unmute yourself, Number
22 3073.

23 MR. WALKER: Can you hear me now?

24 MR. NEWLAND: Yes.

25

1 MR. WALKER: Good afternoon. My name is Robert
2 Walker. I'm the first chief of Anvik here. And all this
3 testimony that I'm hearing from the people from up river
4 (indiscernible), it's very much true. Because in the last
5 20th century when the (indiscernible) of the fish
6 commission worked in (indiscernible) congress, which I
7 asked Pauly Wheeler (indiscernible) in Anchorage back in
8 the early 2000s -- he was an anthropologist here. And I
9 asked another (indiscernible) who is he.

10 Pauly (indiscernible) works for the fish
11 managers in the mouth of the Yukon. And I asked him about
12 if he could go back to when Katmai exploded back in 1912,
13 how much does it reflect on our fisheries back then. And
14 the paperwork that I got from her and the state, it's from
15 (indiscernible) fisheries. And this was 1923. It's
16 pretty interesting to read on what really happened when
17 the Katmai explosion really interrupt with the fisheries
18 on the Yukon or across on the (indiscernible).

19 And when I do (indiscernible) here, no one --
20 the federal government actually (indiscernible) commercial
21 fisheries with the tribal people on the Yukon to buy fish
22 from them to run their (indiscernible) before a plan came
23 into use. And it talks about how, you know, in a fish
24 cannery at the mouth of the Yukon, (indiscernible)
25 Fisheries, Incorporated.

1 They manage to can over a million fish in their
2 cannery, and all these fish were caught with fish wheels.
3 They were introduced into the country back in the early
4 1900s. We moved from Y1, Y2, Y3, and Y4 on to Y5 and 6.
5 These are pretty interesting that each (indiscernible)
6 Rampart and further up the Tanana, and (indiscernible).

7 And she's talking (indiscernible) these fish
8 were targeted were Chinook salmon because that's what the
9 dog handlers or the (indiscernible) drivers or whatever
10 would buy these. And that was the (indiscernible) search.

11 So when you look at those days back in 1921,
12 '22, or '23, when this was all put into place -- and
13 what's interesting is this (indiscernible) came on to
14 (indiscernible) and they found that was put into the
15 library in 1934. And the other one was put into
16 Washington, D.C. as part of the Department of Commerce
17 where the government puts them out (indiscernible) this
18 special place. But people going back in (indiscernible)
19 when they started (indiscernible) stream samples on
20 Chinook salmon. (Indiscernible) because they didn't do
21 any kind of fish counting up in the tributaries, but they
22 did some in the salmon (indiscernible). And then they did
23 this to tell how many you're allowed to fish and what and
24 where. They're pretty much trying to get a really

25

1 (indiscernible) on fish. And how the fish crashed in
2 1918.

3 So, you know -- and once they outlawed the fish
4 wheels, outlawed the fish traps and your wheel, too, and
5 nets. And each unit of Y1, 2 3 4, and 5 were all good
6 fish with nine-and-a-half-inch mesh back then. The
7 (indiscernible) being in a fish (indiscernible) that were
8 (indiscernible) this year down the lower Yukon because you
9 wanted more pounds to get because the quota was set at 5
10 (indiscernible) or 8,000 or 10,000 per Y1, 2 or 3 or 4.

11 So you know where a lot of this fish started
12 disappearing, the big fish, because of the bigger nets.
13 And (indiscernible) this year talking about how these
14 fisheries (indiscernible) and Julia Hyslop, you know, she
15 really put a cap on that when (indiscernible) state
16 regulated on (indiscernible) buying salmon
17 (indiscernible). And it's really put a lot of
18 (indiscernible) on too. Kaltag, (indiscernible), all the
19 way up, where some are chum.

20 So what we really look at is (indiscernible).
21 Now we haven't fished in 10 years. And then 120,000
22 salmon are counted by the fish and (indiscernible), and
23 they're shutting it down for the river.

24 But the question I always ask of biologists,
25 whether they're federal or state, is that how many

1 (indiscernible) salmon are in the (indiscernible)? They
2 don't really know. Well, I said all the years that I
3 fished, I saw maybe 150 fish every summer for the last
4 maybe ten years until they shut it off. But we live in
5 (indiscernible) and fish non-regular fish. You have those
6 (indiscernible) in there and you don't have
7 (indiscernible). It's just the fish that goes up the
8 river, and that's it.

9 So when you look at all the fish that's being
10 counted that goes by, the state doesn't really give you an
11 adequate percentage of how many spawners there are. And
12 this is really -- I would say this is an altered
13 characteristic of the (indiscernible) to have this brought
14 in by the state because you don't really want to
15 (indiscernible) when you're talking to (indiscernible) one
16 on one, not at an audio. It was (indiscernible), but you
17 can't say it on audio because this is not what they're
18 supposed to be talking about. They're supposed to be
19 talking about how much we're going to get by -- get to the
20 spawning area.

21 So I just -- I mean, finally, it's just not a
22 way -- how we're going to do this, you know, and how we're
23 going to work together on this, and how we're going -- we
24 the one that's sacrificing for the last ten years. You
25 don't see (indiscernible). You don't see the big fishing

1 vessels out there, million dollar fishing vessels.
2 They're not sacrificing. And if you look at this in the
3 (indiscernible) because I was born Catholic, raised
4 (indiscernible) too. It's like salmon. We
5 (indiscernible) salmon (indiscernible).

6 You know, you (indiscernible) meet on Friday.
7 It was a religious thing, and you had to (indiscernible).
8 And this is really, you know, an honor (indiscernible)
9 people don't have (indiscernible) up the river for
10 (indiscernible). And how the people that utilize this,
11 they've been misused and abused by some.

12 Everything we do nowadays is like -- has a price
13 on it. This is really sad, too, because every time
14 there's change you put something else, and it's to remove
15 a resource. And that's (indiscernible) disappear in the
16 next 5 to 20 years. (Indiscernible) renewable resource.

17 I've been around a long time. My birthday is
18 1950, so I've seen a lot of things. I grew up eating
19 salmon three times a day in the summer because we didn't
20 have a (indiscernible) to have meat (indiscernible). Our
21 way of life has changed so much, but with the outside
22 interests (indiscernible) our way of life. I mean,
23 (indiscernible) the summertime, people who would be
24 fishing putting fish away and (indiscernible), whatnot for
25 winter. I don't care what they do with their salmon

1 (indiscernible) going here or there if they're not busy.

2 There's no smoke coming out of the smokehouse.

3 My freezer has been half empty ever since
4 (indiscernible) change (indiscernible). It's up and down
5 the river. I know that people are talking. We have a
6 (indiscernible). Sometimes we have a (indiscernible)
7 discussion that (indiscernible).

8 MR. NEWLAND: Mr. Walker.

9 MR. WALKER: (Indiscernible) task force.

10 MR. NEWLAND: Mr. Walker.

11 MR. WALKER: Yes.

12 MR. NEWLAND: I'm sorry to interrupt. We have
13 one hour left. I appreciate your comments, especially the
14 history of the development of the fishery. We have a
15 number of speakers waiting to --

16 MR. WALKER: Okay. I'll just wrap it up. Okay?

17 MR. NEWLAND: Sure. If you can do it briefly.

18 MR. WALKER: Yeah. I would like to thank you
19 people for coming out and listening to us, and hopefully
20 (indiscernible) they will allow fisheries here, too,
21 (indiscernible). But anyway, thank you very much. I'd
22 like to thank everybody for stepping up, too, because a
23 lot of these things that you know you forget. And it's
24 nice to be reminded. Thank you very much.

25 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

1 So we have one hour left. I want to make sure
2 we have an opportunity for those of you who have come up
3 to the front table, that you all have a chance to speak.
4 But I just want you to be aware of the time that we do
5 have left.

6 Yes, we'll go to you, and then, sir, in the
7 vest.

8 FEMALE SPEAKER: Mr. Newland, it was brought to
9 my attention that there is some youth that are at the end
10 of the table that need to leave. And so I'm not sure --
11 it's up to you.

12 MR. NEWLAND: Sure. I will look down the line
13 and see if there is no objection. Okay.

14 SPEAKER: (Speaking Native language.) Everybody
15 (indiscernible) knows that I'm (indiscernible), and when
16 we want to say something and they come to me and ask me
17 "Could you go up there with me," I'll stand with them.
18 With that, I'll have this young man introduce himself.
19 He's got to go back to school, but he wanted to make a
20 statement.

21 YOUTH: Hello. I am (indiscernible), and I am
22 from Russian (indiscernible). Growing up we had all
23 different family. We have -- we rely a lot more on our
24 resources than (indiscernible). Growing up, my mom and
25

1 stepdad taught us, once we got all (indiscernible) to --
2 and to deal with (indiscernible).

3 I had a dream one night. I do not know why. I
4 had a dream of, like, people from the past just fishing
5 and all that. I don't know if I was there, but there was
6 (indiscernible).

7 We need fish. And fish is like our -- fish is a
8 part of our lives, and our Native -- our Native part. And
9 a lot of the abilities that I have, all these big
10 (indiscernible) that they can go on their own and eat fish
11 and a lot of other things from our Native (indiscernible).
12 And thank you.

13 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you for joining us today and
14 for speaking up. I really appreciate you -- I really
15 appreciate you making time to share your perspective and
16 your experience and your viewpoints.

17 We'll come here, and then, sir, in that vest,
18 you'll probably be our last speaker for the day, depending
19 on time and. Yeah. We'll come down and then end with
20 you.

21 MS. HILDEBRAND: Thank you, Mr. Newland.
22 (Indiscernible) coming to Fairbanks, Alaska. We
23 appreciate you coming here. We've seen you twice now, and
24 we appreciate the priority given to our people. (Speaking
25 Native language.)

1 I'm Sharon Hildebrand. I'm from Nulato, a
2 tribal member of Nulato. I'm the vice-president of Tanana
3 Chiefs Conference, where I was elected earlier this spring
4 by our tribes.

5 The mission of NOAA is to understand the
6 (indiscernible) changes in climate weather or
7 (indiscernible). To share my knowledge and information
8 with others and conserve and manage coastal and
9 (indiscernible) ecosystems and resources. That is NOAA's
10 mission.

11 Growing up in Nulato where I was raised by my
12 grandmother, I was brought to fish camps, raised
13 traditionally at fish camp. It imposed on me my identity
14 of who I am, of where I come from, my value system.

15 When I moved to Fairbanks, I saw that young
16 people who did not have that strong identity system, they
17 tended to fall through the cracks, and they were
18 suffering. And it's not by accident that our people are
19 suffering today that are experiencing crisis with alcohol
20 and drug abuse. I also understand that there was only
21 1 percent of the of the NOAA's millions of dollars in the
22 (indiscernible) that's being sent to Alaska. That's
23 \$700,000.

24 I think if the government would like to support
25 us and who we are as tribal leaders, then you also need to

1 do it through what you're funding, because right now, what
2 you're funding does not support what we're sharing with
3 you. It's only 1 percent. That's not very much.

4 Another thing is that we're -- what we're
5 experiencing is similar to the termination era in the
6 (indiscernible - background noise). We're slowly being
7 pushed out of our rural communities. I'm here in
8 Fairbanks; I was raised in a village. I moved from the
9 village because of opportunity. I was raising a young son
10 at the time. But many of our people, they can be provided
11 an opportunity to stay in our communities, not being
12 pushed out because there's no food.

13 Our people, they measure their value by
14 social -- social wealth. How much food you have in the
15 freezer, how much food you're (indiscernible - background
16 noise), and Chief Mike brought up to my attention that
17 there's not a lot of leaders here today because many of
18 them are putting away their moose meat for the winter.

19 We appreciate you coming to us and hearing our
20 concerns and issues. Along with the pastor, we also would
21 like to request that comanagement is given to our people.
22 We seek action to address the fragmentation and lack of
23 accountability across the Yukon River and ecosystem, and
24 seek the formation of a cross-boundary ocean headwaters
25 ecosystem (indiscernible) per agency (indiscernible) and

1 task force to complete a comprehensive management
2 assessment of the Yukon river salmon, led by the tribes
3 and indigenous knowledge providing an action report within
4 one year.

5 This effort should be supplemented with a DOI
6 engaged team of experience mediators to facilitate a
7 transparent and productive public policy dialogue with all
8 the sovereigns and stakeholders in the region. We
9 appreciate your words of the tribes of the Columbia River,
10 and believe this is also a good (indiscernible).
11 (Speaking Native language.)

12 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you very much. We
13 appreciate your comments and taking time to be with us
14 today.

15 MS. HERBERT: Hello. Hi. I'm Darlene Herbert.
16 (Speaking Native language.) I have history. When I grew
17 up I saw moose and all the subsistence animals. (Speaking
18 Native language.) (Indiscernible) Tanana (indiscernible).

19 My name is Darlene Herbert. I'm a tribal member
20 of Gwichyaa Zhee. And I grew up in the Village. My first
21 language was Gwich'in. And when I went to the
22 (indiscernible) school, I had to learn how to talk
23 English. And it was very hard for me to learn how to talk
24 English, because I never heard it before or -- and I had
25 my hands (indiscernible) for talking in the class.

1 Anyway, I grew up out in the woods, and we grew
2 up with fish. And a long time ago, my grandmother told me
3 that a long time ago, before anybody came around in
4 Alaska, tribal people did not have a piece of paper to
5 know where your land was. Every member in the village
6 always had a piece of land where they can go hunting and
7 fishing or whatever. And it just goes on for generation
8 and generation and generation.

9 And also, we did not need a piece of paper to
10 tell us what to do, because we've been there for thousands
11 and thousands and thousands and thousands of years. We
12 learned from our ancestors, and it just keep on going.
13 Like, there's things that I know today which I will give
14 to my grandkids.

15 I don't know if they'll ever survive, though.
16 The world is so different now with climate change, the
17 war, everything. And while you're all sitting up here
18 making the decision for us and saying that we should not
19 fish, that is so wrong. Because these people down here,
20 down river, they can fish. Up river they could fish. But
21 people in the middle, we cannot fish. (Indiscernible) the
22 Native. I don't eat fish, I get sick. I don't eat moose
23 meat, I don't have the strength. And that's just the way
24 it is.

25

1 And you want to make rules for us. Let some
2 people from the Villages sit up there with you to tell you
3 how it really is. You can't just come to meetings and
4 say, "Oh, this person said that?" But how do you know?
5 How do you know?

6 We live there, we were born there, we'll die
7 there. We'll never leave this place. And if we are going
8 to make rules, please include the Native people that live
9 in that area. Because if I out and go hunting for fish,
10 for salmon, you'll take my boat, you'll take my engine,
11 you'll take my gun, you'll take my nets, you'll take my
12 food. I will just walk away with the clothes I have on.

13 Thank you.

14 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

15 MR. STEVENS: Okay. Thank you. My name is --
16 excuse me. My name is Don Stevens. I'm from Stevens
17 Village. That's in the Yukon Flats. So the real eastern
18 part of the Yukon River. And subsistence users. Totally
19 subsistence.

20 I just want to make a couple of comments. And
21 now today, I used to have old people used to say when
22 we -- when there is trouble, and we had trouble in
23 communities, and just trouble in general, they used to say
24 lift up. And we lift up the -- like, if a family is
25 having trouble, we'd lift that family up and stuff.

1 So I think we're trying to live off our fish,
2 our subsistence, which is -- as we know it, it's really a
3 pretty big drop in the past couple of years. And I'm kind
4 of getting up there (indiscernible) here pretty soon.
5 But, man, this last couple of years -- or three years ago,
6 the fish are -- we can't get really much fish.

7 The Yukon River is pretty much totally
8 subsistence. And you look at all the tributaries coming
9 into it, all the (indiscernible) Native Villages. And
10 they're all -- we all rely on fish. And people don't
11 over -- they don't overfish. They get what they need,
12 there is a lot of families, there is a lot of families.
13 All the families. There's a lot of families that can't
14 get out there. The people don't have -- every family
15 don't have a boat. A lot of families, cousins and uncles
16 and aunties, they rely on each other to help with gas,
17 food. And that way when we see a fish camp along the
18 river, that's just not one family fishing there. There's
19 two or three families fishing together. And that way,
20 we're not there to make money. We're getting food for our
21 elders and for the young people. And so it's always been
22 that way.

23 And so one mention that I want to -- I know you
24 guys got -- are limited on time here, but there's that
25 bycatch that was (indiscernible) Fish & Game. They all

1 call it by bycatch. And that's where we heard that our --
2 some people brought it out here today. We know there's
3 the bycatch with this -- there's big money in it. Even
4 our safe, our Fish & Game. They're making big money on
5 that big high seas bycatch where they're just throwing
6 salmon away. And because we're subsistence users, that
7 there's no money -- hardly any money involved with the
8 State. And we know that there's a lot of people that are
9 going after that big money and stuff.

10 And so on the Yukon there's Interior, the Yukon,
11 the tributaries of the Tanana. We're all -- what do we --
12 we just get enough for just what we need for the winter.
13 And now that it's gone, and it's just -- we're going to
14 have to hit it hard with Fish & Game. That's our safe
15 Fish & Game. They don't -- like I said, they're after
16 that big money. And it is really tough for subsistence
17 that's -- you came into subsistence here in Fairbanks, but
18 next time you travel, you got to come out to one of the
19 bigger communities along the rivers and stuff, and then
20 you will -- then this right here, you're in the city right
21 here, and this is -- we're here because this is -- you
22 guys are having a meeting and stuff. And you guys want to
23 see how hard it is that you're going to have to come to
24 the river. Come to the camps. And then you will -- then
25 you're going to see. But not this way.

1 And there was a couple of mention that I want to
2 kind of highlight that in the testimonies here today from
3 our -- from the (indiscernible) there from our Native
4 leaders and stuff that you, that this -- these words has
5 to be taken serious. These are really serious. Because
6 we see that -- there are the food prices right here in the
7 store right here, right here in Fairbanks.

8 This time when the stores run out of food,
9 there's going to be no food. Everybody's going to go back
10 to the river. That's where -- that's why we need really a
11 lot of protection. And I know there's a couple other
12 people that want to speak too. But again, I appreciate
13 one-on-one with Yukon River and Tribal people here in
14 Alaska. So (speaking Native language).

15 FEMALE SPEAKER: Mr. (indiscernible), I don't
16 mean to interrupt but we have 45 minutes remaining now.
17 We need to start limiting our discussion time for -- so
18 everybody has a chance to talk.

19 MR. NEWLAND: I wanted to make sure that
20 everybody who is already up here waiting through the
21 gentleman in the vest had an opportunity to speak because
22 we committed to that. Try not to limit people's time
23 because people have different ways of speaking. And so
24 just ask everyone to be respectful of one another.

25

1 FEMALE SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I am
2 (indiscernible). You can say "Grock an a," say it.

3 (Audience responds.)

4 Good. The ones that said it are truly
5 interested in why I'm here. The ones that sit and look at
6 me, I know you're not interested. Okay.

7 I am a quite calm person, and I come from the
8 tribe of (indiscernible). But I'm also Yup'ik. I come
9 from the Cavanaugh family that came to (indiscernible).

10 We're a very device devised people. You're not
11 talking to just one tribe here. You're talking to a
12 multitude of people. And they came from Bristol Bay. I
13 congratulate you for going out of your way, going down to
14 Washington, D.C., (indiscernible) your position. We
15 (indiscernible) you understand us more, I think, than
16 anybody else sitting up there.

17 But I know you are all here to "work with us."
18 Thank you for coming to try to work with us. You know,
19 that's what we expect from you. But you have respect from
20 us. It's our way of life on how we sustain ourself. We
21 have sustained ourself as you've been told over and over
22 from the knowledge of our elders. We have not -- we
23 haven't sustained ourself from the book being taught in
24 the English words. Our (indiscernible) really lacks
25 English because it's not what sustains me.

1 What sustains me is always my people, my land,
2 my fish, my water. Today we are talking only about one
3 fish. I have many fish that I live on. I live on pike.
4 I live on tomcod. I live on sea fish. I live on
5 grayling. I live on half-dried fish. I live on sink
6 fish. I live on sawfish. I mean, there's a variety of
7 fishes I live on. And there's a variety of seasons. But
8 today you only want to talk about salmon.

9 Well, salmon, at one time, was not all over
10 Alaska. And salmon came in three phases up to my Village
11 in Holy Cross. It came -- that first fish came under the
12 ice, and the second came -- fish came in June, and the
13 third fish came in July. That was the salmon. From where
14 he came, he had the more (indiscernible), and he had the
15 most bones in him for me to understand when I'm cutting
16 the fish, my grandma would tell me the story on the salmon
17 so I can pass it on to my children and my grandchildren.

18 Now, when I bring my -- when I travel -- I am
19 now trying to live in the city, but I don't like it. I
20 don't like it at all because I don't have no -- my own
21 people around me encouraging me to keep my way of life
22 going about the salmon.

23 We would have Native dance that we do our thing.
24 We call this motion dance. And we dance above our salmon,
25 and we thank the salmon for coming to our land and to feed

1 me for a little while and to feed my children. That's
2 what we thank the salmon for. But when we hear about
3 story (indiscernible) about the (indiscernible) out in the
4 ocean that's stealing from me, do you think it makes me
5 happy? No, no, no. Because aside from feeding my
6 children, or my tribe, they're stealing from me. Wherever
7 I am, they're stealing my fish. What am I going to do
8 about it? Sit there and cry? That's how you people come
9 to help us. It is about time! I congratulate you, every
10 one of you to be here (indiscernible) that are coming
11 here.

12 I don't know what that man's name is over there.
13 He wasn't introduced. So I don't know what he does. What
14 do you do?

15 MALE SPEAKER: My name is (indiscernible), and I
16 work with the Bureau of Land Management, and I'm the state
17 rep for BLM here in Alaska.

18 FEMALE SPEAKER: Oh, a BLM man. Okay.

19 MALE SPEAKER: Very nice to meet you.

20 FEMALE SPEAKER: I'm not snooping. Now I know.
21 I don't like -- (indiscernible). I'm inquisitive. I
22 (indiscernible) where you come from, I want to know what
23 they're doing. Because you all are being inquisitive
24 about what I'm going to say to you.

25

1 So I'm not a big organization person. I don't
2 go to Washington, D.C., to attend meetings. I listen to
3 (indiscernible), but I listen to what my people talk
4 about. And that's how I've lived, and that's how I intend
5 to live. I'm just fighting my problem and somebody else's
6 problem, you know. My grandma's whole saying was, "Marie,
7 when you get old, only talk about what you know because
8 you don't know everything." We're just going to live this
9 (indiscernible). That's good enough.

10 (Speaking Native language.) Have a great
11 afternoon.

12 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you very much.

13 FEMALE SPEAKER: My name is (indiscernible), AND
14 I'm from the tribe of -- I'm from Minto. I'm just going
15 to say that -- keep it short. I grew up on the Tanana
16 River. I fished with my parents, my grandparents, even
17 before the State of -- before Alaska became a state. We
18 lived in a fish camp.

19 And for the last three or four years, there's no
20 fish. We don't even bother to go to camp anymore because
21 there's no fish. We didn't go fishing the last two
22 summers because, you know, we put our net in and only one
23 or two fish. And usually we do a first catch, like --
24 (indiscernible). So I'm saying there's, you know, no
25 fish. I'm sorry.

1 And to the people that donated to us, we -- I'm
2 assuming that you (indiscernible) people of the city
3 because we never see any -- see any in the Village.

4 And I just want to say thank you for this
5 meeting.

6 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

7 Actually, we're going to go to this gentleman on
8 the end of the table and make our way back, because he was
9 up here first.

10 MALE SPEAKER: Yes. Thank you. I'll be real
11 quick because I know there's other people who want to
12 talk.

13 I want to talk about the hardships, that they're
14 great. I have a solution.

15 MR. NEWLAND: Can you share your name, first,
16 sir.

17 MR. KRIEG: Oh, yes. My name is John Krieg. I'm
18 from North Pole, Alaska. I have a solution for this whole
19 problem.

20 In 1959, the State of Alaska adopted a law
21 5 AAC 39.222. And it is the policy for the management of
22 sustainable salmon fisheries. It talks about all of the
23 problems that we're talking about today. And it talks
24 about the salmon runs have to be the same at a level that
25 could be maintained. If they're not maintained in those

1 levels, steps are immediately taken to get those levels
2 back up there. This is a State law.

3 And I'm just asking you, the 14 pages -- I'm not
4 going to read it, I'm going to give you a copy of it. If
5 you would adopt that -- it talks about hatcheries. It
6 talks about Area M. It talks about all of the issues that
7 we're talking about today. I got 14 pages here for you.

8 Unfortunately -- and I'm not affiliated with any
9 group. I want to say that right now -- the State of
10 Alaska is not going by these laws. If they were, we
11 wouldn't have the problems that we have today.

12 I would encourage everybody to look into this
13 law. I'll repeat it again. It's 5 AAC 39.222. The State
14 is violating the law. The board of fish and the fish
15 commissioner are not going by this law. And they should
16 be held accountable.

17 So I'm going to have to go. Thanks for
18 coming. I hope you enjoy your time in Alaska.

19 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

20 MR. PETER: Thank you for coming to
21 (indiscernible) in your presence. I am Mike Peter. I am
22 Gwichyaa Zhee Tribal Government, second chief. I'm also a
23 past first chief. It's also known as (indiscernible).

24 I hear -- what (indiscernible) was mentioning
25 (indiscernible), you know, that one vote provides for four

1 to five households in Nulato. Nulato (indiscernible)
2 would also be have single-parent families out there too.
3 So that and the comangement, Nulato is -- a lot of
4 Villages are part of these refuges. You know. I mean,
5 they create some funding opportunities just to keep
6 (indiscernible) to the city, to move to, like, Fairbanks
7 for work.

8 They need some solution with the comangement.
9 It would actually help a lot of these Villages. I mean,
10 we're out there, we're not going anywhere. And then who
11 knows better the lay of the land than the people
12 themselves, the indigenous people that are out there. And
13 then with that -- you know, we need protection of our
14 water, our land, and our animals. And what's in the water
15 also.

16 I think your elders should be looked at twice,
17 the Indian refuges. (Indiscernible) is a delicate
18 ecosystem right now we're dealing with. You know. And
19 also, too, for the Bureau of Land Management. It let burn
20 policy needs to be re-looked at. Everything is burning up
21 out there now. There's not (indiscernible). Animals are
22 burning. People can't even trap anymore. Their
23 livelihood. Some people (indiscernible) some people
24 because they're actually being -- they're burnt, going up
25 in smoke, you know. (Indiscernible.)

1 And also, too, that -- you know, that there's so
2 much, you know, that me growing up, I -- (indiscernible)
3 every summer. I remember going fish hunting with my
4 grandmother. Every summer she'd have a moose hide that
5 she'd be soaking, and I'd be out there every morning or
6 afternoon, you know, twist (indiscernible) -- twisting it,
7 you know. And she'd be hanging it, and then she'd sew
8 again and twist it again with a stick, you know. And then
9 I got (indiscernible). (Indiscernible) even had a chance
10 to (indiscernible). You know. I didn't (indiscernible).
11 You know, maybe a few times. You know, but it -- you
12 know, (indiscernible), I think part of our life is also in
13 being on the land and in the camp.

14 I remember one time the Fourth of July came up,
15 and my grandma said, "Well, (indiscernible) we're going to
16 town." Okay. So all right. You know, the next thing,
17 "Well, let's go. We're going."

18 (Indiscernible), so we left that afternoon, and
19 we were just down for that afternoon (indiscernible). But
20 other than that, yes, I think that the local
21 (indiscernible) would be the best source, or, you know,
22 the comanagement, I kind of (indiscernible) going around
23 in circles. But I think that's another thing to look at,
24 or see what we can do. (Indiscernible) our elders. You
25 know, nobody is willing to talk to an outsider. You can

1 get information from another person out in the villages,
2 but they won't talk to an outsider.

3 So, you know, there's a lot of people that
4 (indiscernible) prosecute or punish. Even more fish
5 (indiscernible), too, but, you know, that's exactly
6 where -- we're treated like criminals.

7 You know, all we're doing is trying to feed our
8 families. You know, all we want to do is, you know, put
9 food away (indiscernible). And like Don mentioned, too,
10 the more of our leadership right now, everybody's home
11 getting ready for winter. You know, they're taking care
12 of their meet, their moose, and also they're hauling wood,
13 getting the wood, you know, ready for winter. The
14 winters, you know, they're long out here and dark. So
15 now, you know, is the time to do it because the rivers are
16 open, the rivers are not frozen. But we're sure, too, our
17 waterways need to be protected, because that's what we
18 depend on. You know, I'm sure you've heard it before the
19 water is life. Thank you.

20 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

21 So we have 20 minutes left. We can continue to
22 hear from folks. Just, you know, ask that you be mindful
23 of the time.

24 MS. WOOD: Good afternoon. My name is Brook Wood,
25 and I'm from Rampart. (Indiscernible.)

1 I want to thank you for coming to Alaska, and
2 for the time you have spent with us here. We have
3 (indiscernible), we have exhausted all avenues possible,
4 and (indiscernible) we have not had any of our objectives
5 or rules met. I have been (indiscernible), I haven't been
6 entitled consultation with you Raina and Bryan. I owe our
7 secretary of interior one -- able to fish with their
8 grandmother or people working (indiscernible).

9 The impasse of no salmon is detrimental. Many
10 of our community aren't from any urban hubs, and to get
11 here -- personally for my family, it would be thousands of
12 dollars (indiscernible) remote areas. (Indiscernible)
13 food in to carry as (indiscernible) Alaska culture. And I
14 can't explain to you what it feels like to not be able to
15 fish, being home when the sun does not set, and to have
16 (indiscernible). I prefer traditional values, like
17 some -- we caught our first (indiscernible), and I let go
18 in order to help our tribes (indiscernible).

19 We typically do not see two salmon species
20 crashing at the same time, so this shouldn't be a big
21 concern for (indiscernible). Right now bycatch in the
22 Bering Sea is an issue that needs (indiscernible), and
23 there is no cap for (indiscernible) salmon bycatch. Last
24 year there was 500,000, and I think for Area M, the
25 commercial division director told me (indiscernible)

1 300,000 in chum down for Western Alaska were intercepted.
2 So these are some very big issues.

3 And for our king salmon, I'm very concerned
4 about the return. We had very little fish
5 (indiscernible). You are Alaska (indiscernible). There
6 is no other place we can go for help, so the things that
7 our communities are asking, they need to be implemented.
8 One thing that I really ask is that in this document from
9 the (indiscernible), (indiscernible) on the Yukon, he's
10 one of those energetic (indiscernible) that have a net.
11 His name is (indiscernible). He told us not to touch the
12 salmon.

13 Right now the State is trying to research and
14 collect data to (indiscernible) for salmon, but really,
15 our (indiscernible) told us not to touch the salmon. It's
16 (indiscernible) to not touch the salmon. The State cannot
17 be able to research and take our salmon.

18 That's all I can think of. Thank you so much
19 for being here.

20 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

21 MS. WOODS: My name is Janet Woods. I'm a tribal
22 owner of Rmapart, Alaska. I know there was a lot of talk
23 about moose -- I mean, about the fish, but I also want --
24 I also am really concerned about our moose because of

25

1 their pervading in our areas, and a lot of people coming
2 in and depleting our resources that we depend on.

3 They have stores that they can go to, but we, as
4 Native people, because some of our Villages are so small,
5 we don't have stores to go to. And that's another issue
6 because I know the state of Alaska makes a lot of money on
7 those permits. In fact, I was standing in line at Fred
8 Meyer. \$1,000 they had to pay for our permit.

9 And I saw in the newspaper, Fairbanks Daily
10 News-Miner, two years they could not issue any permits
11 because of COVID. And they were -- frankly, because they
12 did not make their money from those permits. So . . .

13 And the other thing that I saw three weeks ago,
14 a man, two racks, moose, feeding on the airplane, checking
15 in with only six boxes -- six boxes of freezer meat of
16 those freezer boxes. What happened to all the rest of
17 that meat that we so much depend on?

18 So that's another issue that's got to be
19 addressed, is our moose, our caribou for our people that
20 we -- our lives depend.

21 The other thing that I wanted to mention, too,
22 was do need comanagement. And I think (indiscernible),
23 she talked about that.

24 The other thing is -- and we're in the middle of
25 the Yukon. There's many species of fish that -- when they

1 enter the Yukon. Many species. But as they get to
2 Rampart there is very few species of fish. Springtime is
3 fly fish. And really, we really depend on the Chinook
4 salmon because that's the only thing there is by the time
5 they make it up, because all the other species we don't
6 get. And that's what we get there in the middle of the
7 Yukon. So that's the other thing, that we don't get all
8 those species that the lower Yukon people -- the lower
9 Native people get.

10 The other thing that's concerning to me is I
11 know, like, my daughter, Brook, had said that "Don't touch
12 the salmon, because we don't do that." But the other
13 thing that I think we need to look at that we're not
14 looking at, we're not addressing is when our fish are
15 spawning, are those areas clean that they can get up? Are
16 they obstructed because of the car- -- I mean, because of
17 the beaver or whatever else, the trees? Are we checking
18 those spawning areas, making sure that they can get up to
19 those spawning areas? That has not been addressed.

20 And I think -- I really think what Julie Roberts
21 had said, that the commercial permits to be able to
22 commercial fish, I think that's really ruined the fish,
23 the amount of fish coming up the Yukon. Also, I
24 witnessed, at the Yukon River bridge, many years ago when
25 they were -- they could sell the roe, huge piles, huge

1 piles of fall fish is sitting on the bank. Some are cut
2 open to get the roe, and that was it. And there are these
3 fish sitting on the beach, a huge pile just for the roe.

4 And I know that the State is telling you the
5 same thing with our caribou and our moose by issuing those
6 permits. A lot of people come up from Outside to get
7 those permits. And so that's the other thing that you're
8 going to have to really look at.

9 And like many said, one fish net feeds ten
10 families or more. Because a lot of people don't have the
11 means. They don't have the boats or motors. They don't
12 have the nets. But we help them because they're my kids,
13 they're my sisters. So we all fish together. So that's
14 many families just using one net.

15 The other thing is I went to a training on NOAA
16 on the bycatch. They said last year, or the year before,
17 400,000 tons of salmon round up and thrown in the ocean,
18 our food that we eat. So there's got to be something done
19 with that too. And (indiscernible) because I want to give
20 other people a chance. Thank you.

21 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you. I think we have
22 ten minutes left.

23 MS. DEMIENTIEFF: I'm Kathleen Demientieff. I'm
24 from Nenana, Alaska. I am a subsistence moose hunter in
25 Nenana. I was trained in subsistence all my life. The

1 last two years I've been (indiscernible) by the fish
2 table.

3 It breaks my heart to just see my mom not eating
4 her king salmon, so I went to Fred Meyer and bought it.
5 How the heck would Fred Meyer get king salmon? Where's
6 all this fish coming from? Now we have to buy it, and not
7 with food stamps either, cash.

8 Another thing I have a question on is -- I'll
9 give you an example of how the State works with us. We
10 have a road that's going to nowhere. It's called
11 Totchaket. The bridge was built by the City. The State
12 or someone gave them money to build a bridge, and we
13 didn't even know about it until the next year.

14 The council, before I even got on there, decided
15 to -- the tribe decided to apply for the funds. And they
16 finished that bridge. So now we find out that they're
17 selling that land that's two miles away from Minto Flats,
18 Toklat, Kantishna. Kantishna is prime land down there.
19 We have Native allotments down there. We have spiritual
20 lands. We have cemeteries. And there's places that the
21 State don't even know. They didn't come to us as a tribe
22 to ask us. They came after they started it all.

23 And they don't even have enough money to go all
24 the way. They're five miles away from Kantishna. They
25 just want to build that road. What for? Minerals?

1 They're selling that land saying it's agriculture, to feed
2 the people. Well, that land has a lot of silt. So if you
3 don't pick the right land, you're not going to garden.

4 Another thing is that the State was really
5 sneaky, having meetings with us, put an announcement out
6 when everybody's busy either hunting or, you know,
7 trapping, or when people are busy in each season.

8 So we just found out about it, and we have no
9 consent whatsoever. And the other villages too. So we're
10 going to fight there. We own the bridge as a tribe,
11 which, in the whole state of Alaska, who the heck holds a
12 bridge as a tribe.

13 So the other thing is the subsistence. Our
14 river goes by this little town of Nenana. It has, like,
15 250 people. There's Tanana, and then Nenana comes back.
16 The fish comes through. We get the tail end of the fish
17 when they're coming up to spawn certain places. It's not
18 spawning in Canada. We kept telling the State that. It
19 goes up towards Northway in that area.

20 So they classified us in Nenana to stop fishing;
21 to let the fish go to Canada. Well, it doesn't go to
22 Canada (indiscernible). So they don't listen. So they
23 can do whatever they want to do, and I hope that you
24 support our tribes and try to help us, you know, do a
25 stewardship or something to work out these issues.

1 The State can -- keeps making regulations. My
2 dad was a big fighter of subsistence. He went to jail.
3 Going out and fishing, he said, "I'm fishing," and that
4 was it. It costs money to take him out, but he felt that
5 he wanted to fish, so -- he's passed, though. I'm here
6 for him. Thank you.

7 MR. TITUS: My name is Virgil Titus. I'm from Minto,
8 Alaska. I'm a (indiscernible) Chief Peter John. I'm 85
9 years old, and you all come here for the Villages. You're
10 at my table. Every Village you've been lying to.

11 You people from the Villages, you got the
12 rights. There's no cooperation (indiscernible) or you.
13 And so the county that's (indiscernible) with you.
14 Because they won't erase the Village. And (indiscernible)
15 in Washington, D.C. The only way you can say that you're
16 stronger than them. You're stronger than any other
17 culture (indiscernible). And these guys are out there to
18 help you so you (indiscernible). There has to be for your
19 health. It's all documented on what you need up there.
20 All they've got to do is say so.

21 Do you want to get back in court
22 (indiscernible)? (Indiscernible) that have been bouncing
23 around for years and years when you people own this place.
24 You got the rights to say. Minto has got all that
25 (indiscernible) in the (indiscernible) down there in

1 Washington, D.C. And they're the only ones that give us
2 (indiscernible) and salmon in these Village areas to
3 (indiscernible).

4 I'll tell you something about Alaska, I've been
5 to (indiscernible - background noise) on -- if every
6 Village between (indiscernible) and -- down the Yukon
7 River. Down to the mouth of the Yukon, there's three
8 miles of the Yukon River. I've been to some of them.
9 King Salmon all the way up to Barter Island. And I know a
10 lot of people there. I've fished in the Bering Sea. I've
11 fished in the (indiscernible) River. I fished in
12 (indiscernible) there was. They make a lot of money.

13 Our king salmon and all that come off the Bering
14 Sea from out of the mouth of the Yukon River.
15 (Indiscernible.) (Indiscernible) have the rights.
16 (Indiscernible.)

17 The Native people of Alaska (indiscernible) has
18 got the rights to do anything they want to do. Cause you
19 let the chief there in the council, you let the -- Tanana
20 Chiefs let you, Doyon, and all the rest of the
21 (indiscernible). (Indiscernible) fishing. You let
22 everybody with you. So I don't see why you're
23 (indiscernible) when you can all get together and do
24 something. (Indiscernible.) That's all they do out there
25 is fancy (indiscernible) Village. The same this and that

1 about the (indiscernible). Do something about it. You
2 people of the (indiscernible). You got to try
3 (indiscernible).

4 I want to thank you very much.

5 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

6 Ms: Hello. My name is Rita Tolkat (ph). And
7 (indiscernible) Charlie Evans was the (indiscernible -
8 background noise). (Speaking Native language.)

9 I fish -- I fish on the Tanana River, and am
10 able to supply lots of fish towards dog mushers out in
11 Nenana. And also, you know, I was fishing in 2020 on the
12 Yukon River. We didn't get a whole lot.

13 But I want to make one point here, trawling and
14 bycatch. Our own Native people of Alaska have
15 (indiscernible). The first (indiscernible) association,
16 my 30-year-old son, Seth, (indiscernible) Dillingham, and
17 it's a well-known fact that have (indiscernible). So
18 bycatch in Bristol Bay. I just want to notify you of
19 that. And any (indiscernible) money. And now money goes
20 to educational scholarships and (indiscernible) and homes
21 and helping folks of Bristol Bay build houses, et cetera.

22 (Speaking Native language.) Thank you.

23 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

24 So we've got time to hear from our last two
25 speakers, and then we will wrap up our meeting.

1 MS. CANFIELD: Thank you for having me today.

2 My name is Gabe Canfield. I'm Inupiat.

3 I work with the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries
4 association. I represent them. I went to the Yukon River
5 Drainage Fisheries Association, but I can see
6 (indiscernible). I have already heard from so many of our
7 fishers out on the river sharing good sense, their
8 worries, their wants, and their needs.

9 In 1990 when (indiscernible) was formed, it was
10 formed by a coalition of fishers on the Yukon, concerning
11 the health of our salmon. These fishermen are concerned
12 for the same reason, to the same end, our fish, our way of
13 life.

14 I'm (indiscernible) now today asking for
15 (indiscernible) fish. We have the State and Federal
16 management open up the Yukon so that they can subsist,
17 provide for their families, and practice their way of
18 life. And for the third year in a row, we have seen the
19 (indiscernible) that the Yukon fishes are (indiscernible).
20 Instead, they spend their money on ever rising gas prices,
21 and have to get food stamps just to get food that comes
22 from your (indiscernible) way.

23 Our fishers have to attend a different meeting
24 every week where they hear the same (indiscernible). They
25 hear studies, they hear data, they hear not enough

1 information, but they don't give a word with action. They
2 don't give protection, and they don't hear from
3 management.

4 Each meeting that fishers (indiscernible)
5 historically was 10, 15, 20, or 30 fish loss because they
6 couldn't fish those days. One to two days a week all year
7 (indiscernible), and (indiscernible) the fish before it's
8 too late. For our fishermen now it is too little too
9 late. Three years in the Chinook and (indiscernible)
10 closures, our fishers sacrificed days of the
11 (indiscernible) after all. Nowadays our fishers
12 (indiscernible) ten different directions to find a way
13 (indiscernible) to answer our questions (indiscernible),
14 to tell their stories of high food prices and lack of
15 Internet to voice their concerns only to be turned away
16 citing the (indiscernible), and they have to be told |it's
17 not our jurisdiction, it's not our problem.

18 Our (indiscernible) entered spiral
19 (indiscernible) fish. Some of our fishermen have compared
20 it to being in a pinball machine. Our fishers asked for a
21 single location where they can send all their concerns,
22 with the questions they have to be answered. They asked
23 for a spot where there can be solutions and comangement
24 at least consistent and permanent salmon protection.

25

1 It's the time for action and a streamlined way,
2 not more barriers for people to experience. (Speaking
3 Native language.) Thank you for having me.

4 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you very much. I appreciate your
5 time.

6 MS. OBED: Hello. My name is Sarah Obed. I'm the
7 senior vice president for external affairs for Doyon LTD.
8 And I want to acknowledge our board chair. It's the first
9 time in here. And (indiscernible - background noise),
10 too, who spoke earlier, who is also on our board.

11 Our board has spent a lot of time and energy
12 discussing the Yukon River salmon. We have identified key
13 data issues in the Yukon River salmon, including bycatch,
14 oceanic conditions, low quality salmon food, lack of
15 various key analysis, potential harvesting of the Yukon
16 River management area, and potential widespread
17 (indiscernible), and data gaps, including we need better
18 analysis on the (indiscernible) habitat and location for
19 projections. And there is a (indiscernible) discrepancy
20 between (indiscernible) and Eagle where the two sonar
21 stations are.

22 And we ask in support of Tanana Chiefs
23 Conference request for a (indiscernible) sonar. At Doyon,
24 we're not an active -- we're an active supporter,
25 including financial supporter of TCC's efforts to advocate

1 for subsistence by -- and used by our people, including
2 subsistence use on our lands, (indiscernible) neighbors of
3 our lands. We've noticed the lack of connection in terms
4 of funding, research, and communication efforts, and
5 policy action between the agencies.

6 And so the inter-agency effort on Yukon River
7 salmon would be greatly appreciated.

8 This conference and management assessment of the
9 Yukon River salmon that incorporates tribal knowledge and
10 indigenous knowledge where there is accountability. When
11 we -- a proactive way for the federal government to take a
12 leadership position on Yukon River salmon has declined.

13 I would like to offer a chance to our board
14 chair, Chris, to comment.

15 MR. SIMON: Thanks for (indiscernible). My name
16 is Chris Simon. I'm chairman of the board for Doyon, LTD,
17 and (indiscernible) in Fairbanks. (Indiscernible) was
18 snowing today so you guys can make it out of here in time.
19 It's still (indiscernible) outside.

20 You guys came here today to ask (indiscernible)
21 about salmon and how it's affecting the (indiscernible)
22 along the rivers of the Yukon, the Koyukuk, the Katmai,
23 and (indiscernible). And you guys are (indiscernible -
24 background music).

25

1 And I think our representative of the Tanana
2 Chiefs Conference (indiscernible) the big task force that
3 (indiscernible - multiple cell phones). He said we're
4 doing a lot of sacrificing, and we're asking other people
5 to do the same. You know, and the fish that's not fully
6 (indiscernible) the Yukon River, it migrates.

7 A good analogy would be the late 1800s with the
8 buffalo, when they were traveling around the Great Plains,
9 they would go from one state to another. And North
10 Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado. Totally like
11 (indiscernible) North Dakota, I think South Dakota, you
12 guys saw (indiscernible), but we could kill all we want.
13 So that's what we're asking for.

14 We're asking that everyone that there are -- to
15 make sure there's fish in the fish traps on -- and the
16 fish nets next summer. So that's what we're asking for.
17 And we appreciate your time. Thank you.

18 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

19 I want to take just a few minutes to recap some
20 of the comment themes that I heard, and I'll let my
21 colleagues here do the same.

22 But first, I know that a lot of you traveled a
23 long way to be here with us today, and took time out of
24 your lives and your work and your schedule to share with
25 us today, and you have our gratitude and our appreciation

1 for sharing your time and your knowledge with us. It's
2 very helpful. And I know that it isn't always easy to do,
3 especially for a lot of people to speak in public. So we
4 appreciate that.

5 And those of you who joined us online at this
6 meeting, I want to extend the same gratitude to you all as
7 well.

8 So very briefly just some of the common themes
9 that I heard today related to food security, and the
10 sacrifices that tribes and subsistence users, community
11 members have made to protect the fish, and that -- a sense
12 that the burden of those sacrifices is falling on Native
13 people in the Villages, almost exclusively.

14 I heard a lot -- a few -- actually, a few
15 mentions today about Area M. That's a common theme we're
16 hearing in these consultations.

17 I heard a lot about comanagement and the need
18 for funding to go along with it, and the benefit to having
19 travel knowledge go into management decisions, and
20 management being done on the ground by people with
21 thousands of years of expertise.

22 I heard mentioned several times about an
23 ocean-to-headwaters type of task force management
24 structure with reference to the Columbia River model.

25

1 We heard about impacts of -- a number of factors
2 on the health of the fishery. Several speakers noted that
3 commercial fishing and a few other things were areas where
4 we could have -- as humans, have direct impact on some of
5 those things. And several speakers also mentioned the
6 Endangered Species Act.

7 So those are some of the things I heard. That's
8 not everything. I'm just trying to highlight some of the
9 big themes. I welcome those of you who want to submit
10 written comments to us.

11 I'll turn it over to Raina and then Kelly and on
12 down the line.

13 MS. THIELE: I'll be very brief. Just express
14 my gratitude for your time for traveling here to be with
15 us, for those of you online who have stayed with us
16 through the session.

17 I think Bryan did a nice job of recapping some
18 of the major themes. Most of them are very, very much in
19 line with what stood out to me. I have a homework
20 assignment on the Endangered Species Act that I will take
21 back. And, also, just again, just sort of the very
22 similar theme that I heard in Bethel, which is the very
23 human and societal cost of the cultural interruption
24 that's happening. No fish camp means real suffering in
25 communities. And so no fishing means a lot more than just

1 no food. It means something much, much, much, much
2 bigger. And I heard that in Bethel, I heard it strongly
3 today, and I will take it back to Washington as I follow
4 up on this.

5 So thank you again for your time.

6 FEMALE SPEAKER: And I will also be brief right
7 now. Folks have been sitting for a long time, and I'm
8 just (indiscernible) grateful for everybody who came out
9 today and who sat with us and who delivered your
10 perspectives and your testimony.

11 I know a lot of folks traveled far to be here,
12 and I know other folks came in from (indiscernible) being
13 here with us and actively listening and participating. It
14 takes a lot of energy, it takes a lot of time, and a lot
15 of cost. So I just want to express my deep gratitude to
16 everybody on behalf of our Secretary of the Interior.

17 And I also wanted to mention that your message
18 really resonated with me and with everybody up here, that
19 action is key, that we need to kind of break down the
20 silos of the interagency. Right. Work together and try
21 to do something that's useful. And that's very helpful,
22 so we're taking that to heart, we're taking that back to
23 D.C.

24 I just really appreciate you all being here
25 today. Thank you.

1 FEMALE SPEAKER: I will share my thanks and my
2 gratitude for your willingness to share your thoughts with
3 us. They were -- they're very heartfelt for me, and very
4 meaningful. And so thank you, all.

5 I won't reiterate everything that we have heard
6 already from my colleagues. But I want to iterate that,
7 as what was stated at the very beginning, that you have
8 been heard, and we will be working together. I think we
9 have a very clear mandate to work together. Not only
10 amongst the U.S. government, but in collaboration and in
11 partnership with all of you to identify the solutions and
12 the actions.

13 I'll be straight up honest that in many cases we
14 don't know all the reasons why some of the populations of
15 Alaskan salmon are in serious decline, whereas others have
16 had record seven years.

17 You all notice some of the changing conditions.
18 We observe the changing ocean conditions, but they go far
19 beyond our own prediction capabilities with Western
20 science, which is why your perspectives and observations
21 are critical. And we hope that we can work together to
22 merge our science with your science going forward.

23 So I'll keep this short. I do know that I have
24 a colleague on the line, also from NOAA, Zack Penny. if I
25 could turn over to you.

1 MR. PENNY: Hey, everybody. So I'm Zack Penny,
2 and I'm the senior advisor to (indiscernible) NOAA
3 fisheries, but also on tribal engagement.

4 I'm (indiscernible). I'm a (indiscernible)
5 first tribal member from the Columbia River Basin.
6 (Indiscernible) going to NOAA to work with the Columbia
7 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission for seven years.

8 And I just want to say a few things really
9 briefly, but, you know, Kelly and I, we get to listen to a
10 lot of different kinds of consultations and listening
11 sessions around the United States. There's something
12 happening on the East Coast right now with lobster. And
13 the difference between the testimony we heard today and
14 what we heard in some of the other places is just -- it is
15 profound to me, you know. You know, sometimes people are
16 really angry and they come at this in a bad way.

17 Everything I heard today, you know -- there is a
18 difference between people who feel entitled to fisheries
19 and those who actually have a relationship with the land
20 and a relationship with the fish. And, you know, that's
21 what's here. And, you know, I appreciate you coming today
22 to give your testimony with both a good heart and in a
23 good way. We don't always get that. So I really want to
24 express my appreciation for all of your words.

25

1 You know, when I said a couple of things in
2 Bethel that I'll just reiterate here that you're right.
3 For those of you that brought the Columbian River --
4 somebody is saying what you're seeing now had played out
5 in another place in the United States. The Columbia
6 River, the Puget Sound, the Klamath Basin.

7 And you came today with solutions. I'm glad you
8 brought those solutions in. One of the things I hope is
9 different this time -- you know, one of the things I know
10 the Columbia River tribes had is how they -- how to retell
11 their story over and over again. And this continuity that
12 sometimes gets lost when you go in places in like D.C.
13 that you have tribal members sitting in a variety of
14 (indiscernible) positions now. I get to be with NOAA, and
15 I get to translate that voice. So we look forward for
16 you, and look forward to working with our partners in the
17 Interior on things brought today. And I'll stop with
18 that. (Speaking Native language.)

19 FEMALE SPEAKER: I'm going to be really brief.
20 I'm thinking about my (indiscernible). (Indiscernible) to
21 be here, and I want to thank you for sharing and for what
22 you shared, and just say (indiscernible) you haven't
23 heard. We (indiscernible) for action and (indiscernible)
24 government, everything (indiscernible) control, and we'll
25 be carrying that back then. We'll be having

1 (indiscernible) to have (indiscernible) with you. Thank
2 you.

3 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you again for hosting us
4 here today, and for sharing this really profound and
5 important information with us. And also to give us a lot
6 to work with, to think about the next steps and to
7 (indiscernible). And certainly my role here in the State
8 as a land manager with the Bureau of Land Management, we
9 have a lot of important decisions that we're looking at
10 regarding the management of habitat areas, the up-river
11 areas. So that's lots to think about.

12 And as I had an opportunity to engage with a
13 number of you-all here, Paul, and others on land
14 management issues, but I think it's -- the bigger question
15 about the relationship of how we manage the lands here in
16 the state, how that really impacts the -- all of the
17 migratory species, all the species that are of special
18 importance. There's just more to be considered and more
19 to take into account as per making those decisions.

20 So thank you again for sharing today. I
21 appreciate it.

22 MR. NEWLAND: Okay. Then we'll conclude our
23 consultation today. Our team is going to have to leave
24 pretty quick here, so we won't have an opportunity to hang
25 back and answer a lot of questions. But I appreciate,

1 again, on behalf of our entire team across the government
2 and administration all of you who have come out today and
3 shared with us.

4 It's an honor for me to be with you. I
5 understand how important these issues are to your
6 communities and your people, and we're going to honor that
7 with our works. (Speaking Native language.) Thank you so
8 much. I wish you all safe journeys home and good health.
9 Take care.

10 MALE SPEAKER: You know, I have a -- on behalf
11 of my tribe, (indiscernible) tribal government. I have a
12 few things here for the Secretary of the Interior. And I
13 would like to freely give it to you to take back.

14 MR. NEWLAND: Sure.

15 MALE SPEAKER: There is just one question I
16 wanted to ask. It seems like there are a lot of different
17 agencies sitting up here, all listening to our concerns,
18 and et cetera. So who are you=all going to communicate to
19 as a result of this consultation? You know, that's very
20 important. We got to have that feedback; otherwise, it's
21 just us talking and not knowing what's going on. Thank
22 you.

23 MR. NEWLAND: Me. You can communicate with me.

24 MALE SPEAKER: I can communication with you?
25 I'll call you up tomorrow.

1 MR. NEWLAND: All right.

2 4:00 P.M.

3 (End of proceedings.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ALASKA)
) ss.
FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT)

I, Crystal D. Thompson-Bartlett, Court Reporter and Notary Public duly commissioned and qualified in and for the State of Alaska, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings were taken electronically before me and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or at my direction.

That the foregoing transcript is a full, true, and correct transcript of the proceedings, including questions, answers, objections, statements, motions, and exceptions, made and taken at the time of the foregoing proceedings.

That all documents and/or things requested to be included with the transcript of the proceedings have been annexed to and included with said proceedings.

That I am not a relative or employee or attorney or counsel of any of the parties in these proceedings, nor a relative or employee of such attorney or counsel, and that I am not financially interested in said proceedings or the outcome thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand and affixed my Notarial Seal this 28th day of November 2022.

_____/s/_____
CRYSTAL D. THOMPSON-BARTLETT
Notary Public for Alaska
My commission expires: 9/15/2026